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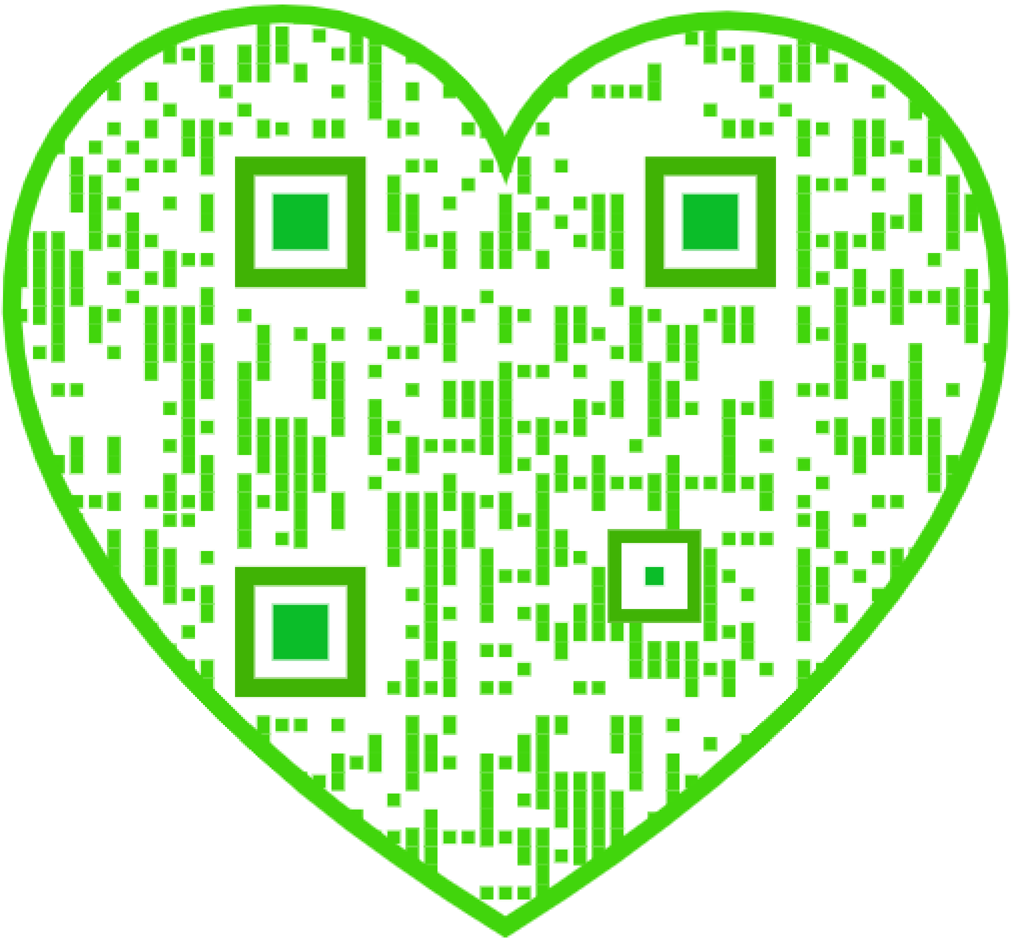
& Restaurant

TOM BROWN

MAY 2025 ● **MARK BIRCHALL** NIALL DAVIDSON **TOM HEYWOOD**
LAURISSA HEYWOOD ANDY SHERIDAN **CRAIG JOHNSTON**



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COVER IMAGE
John Carey

CHEF
TOM
BROWN

THE MONTH OF MOMENTUM

May already. That sweet spot month where Spring is in full flow and Summer is just around the corner. From ancient traditions like May Day to modern milestones like VE Day, May reminds us that history and hope often walk hand in hand.

History and Hope were on full display during the recent Roux Scholarship finals. The competition, founded 41 years ago by the late Albert & Michel Roux Sr, was created with the sole purpose of giving young professional chefs in the UK opportunities previously denied to them, in particular overseas. Over the 4 decades, the Roux Scholarship has grown into the most prestigious of all chef competitions. The standards of excellence, performance and manner that the late Roux brothers expected from a Roux Scholar have never wavered.

Today, with Alain and Michel Roux Jr taking guardianship of the competition, the primary ethos of the competition remains the same as it did 41 years ago. And on 14th April 2025, Craig Johnston, head chef of Angler, was crowned Roux Scholar – joining an alumnus of simply extraordinary chefs. Huge Congratulations to Craig and a massive shout out to his five fellow finalists, Katherine Altham, Liam Anderson, Erin Jackson-Yates, Oliver Robinson, Nikolette Theofylaktidou.

I also attended the launch of the Glenfiddich Scholarship at Westminster Kingsway College. The initiative gives students the chance to attend a one-month internship at Glenfiddich distilleries and is now in its third year. The Escoffier Room was awash with the most incredibly passionate hospitality folk, and the conversation was lively with stories of exceptional hospitality leaders – in education, in hotels, in kitchens and in service. The evening was an amazing celebration of opportunity, hope and future.

A quick 20-minute break in Covent Garden had me seeking out Adam Handling's new chocolate shop. A huge success just a few short weeks after opening. As one friend said to me "those cookies are banging" and they truly are. From the cookies to an incredible array of handmade single origin chocolates and hot chocolates – Adam and his team have simply nailed it. Congratulations.

In this edition, we welcome back Tom Brown and chat through his move to his old stomping ground – The Capital Hotel in Knightsbridge. We pop over the water to Dublin to meet Niall Davidson and discover more about his incredible restaurant, Allta. We chat with Mark Birchall about his ambassadorship role with N25 caviar and Tom and Laura Heywood from Pignut Restaurant talk more about their acclaimed restaurant's exciting new home.

Here's to the month of momentum and bloom!

Claire

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"WHEN FOOTBALLER CRISTIANO RONALDO TRAINED, HE FAMOUSLY WORE ANKLE WEIGHTS. HE DID THAT SO WHEN HE TOOK THEM OFF TO PLAY, HE FELT FREER WHEN HE WAS RUNNING. I FEEL A BIT LIKE THAT. HAVING WORKED WHERE SPACE WAS SO TIGHT AND BEEN RESTRICTED ON WHAT I COULD REALISTICALLY ACHIEVE. I NOW FEEL FREE, WITH SPACE TO BREATHE AND GROW"

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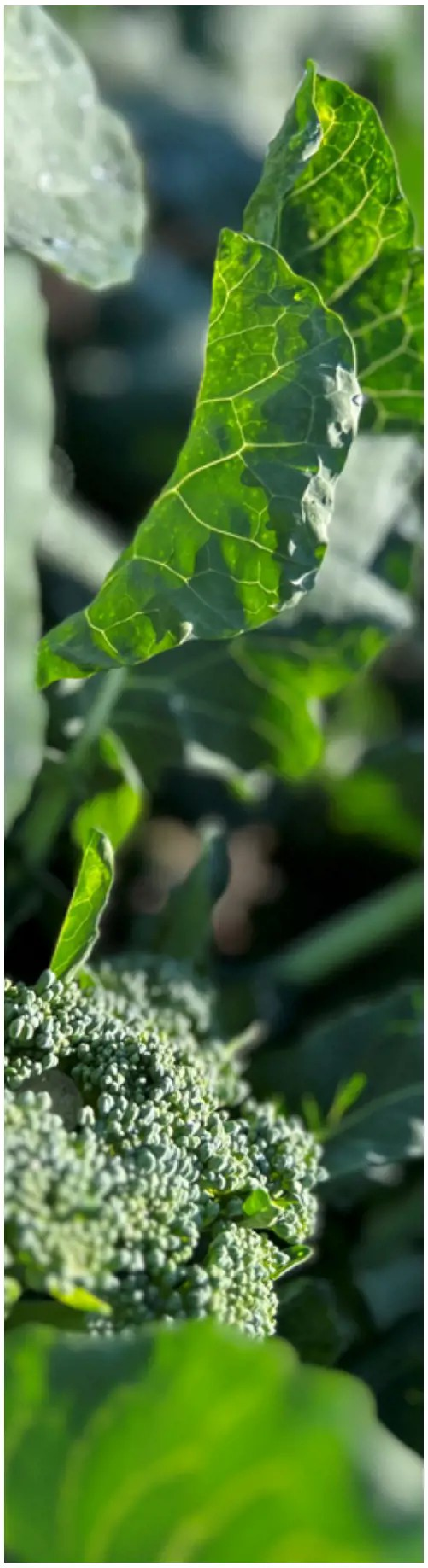

NETHERWOOD ESTATE

"WE WON'T JUST BE LOOKING TO PROVIDE PRODUCE FOR THE TABLE. WE'LL ALSO BE LOOKING TO SUPPLY OTHER RESTAURANTS IN OUR GROUP, SO THAT WE HAVE A YEAR-ROUND SUPPLY." ANDY SHERIDAN

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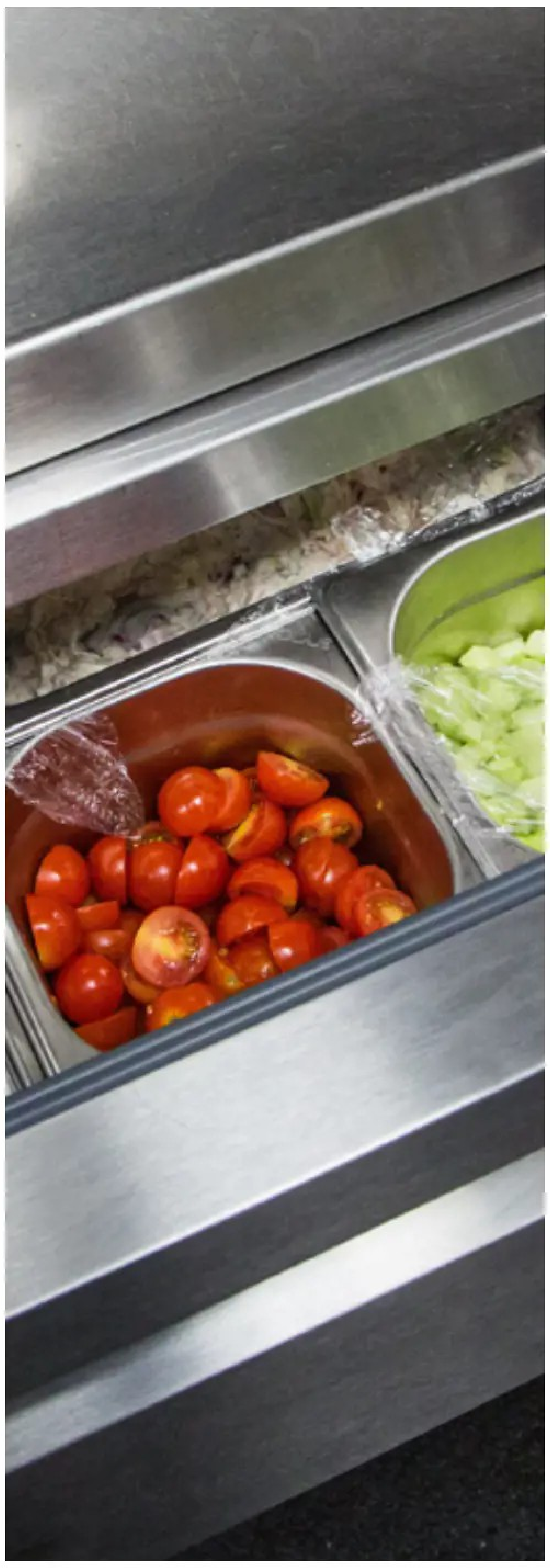

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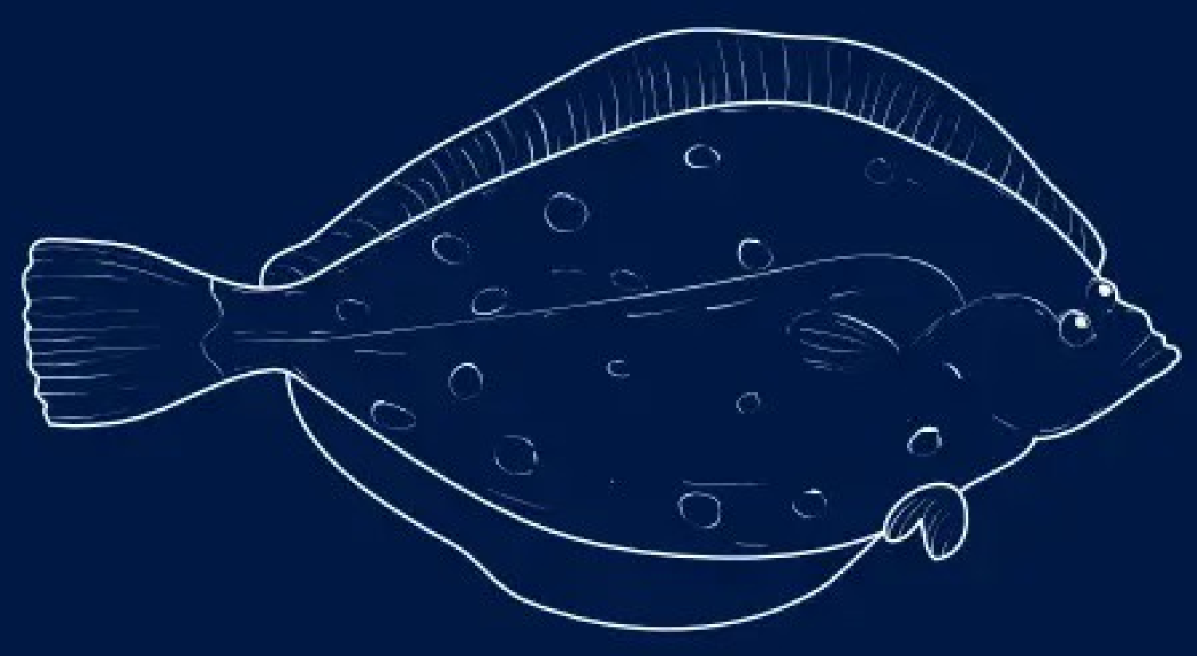
SPRING SERIES

Seafood in Season

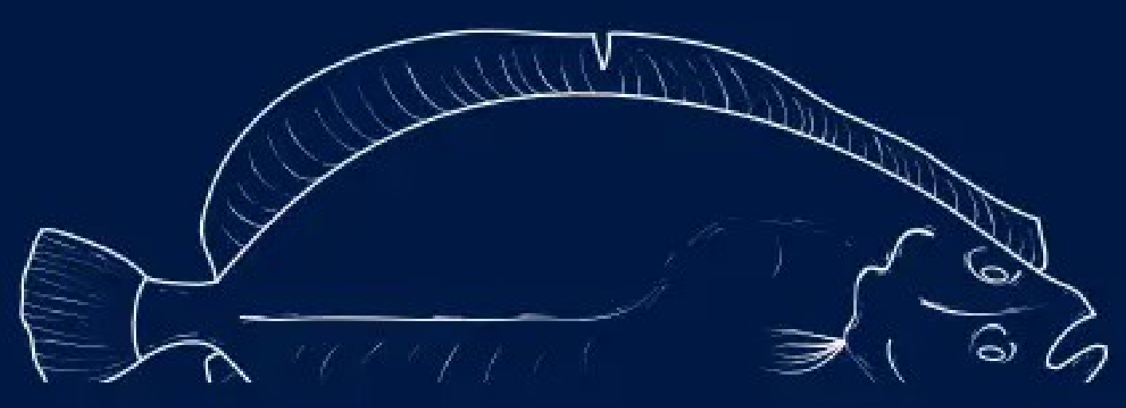
Scotland's world-renowned seafood thrives in the pristine and cool waters that its natural environment provides, but serving the right species during its prime season can be the key to making a dish shine. During the calendar year when each species is at its peak, the very best examples are available due to their natural abundance. Below is an example of the species in peak season this autumn.

SPECIES



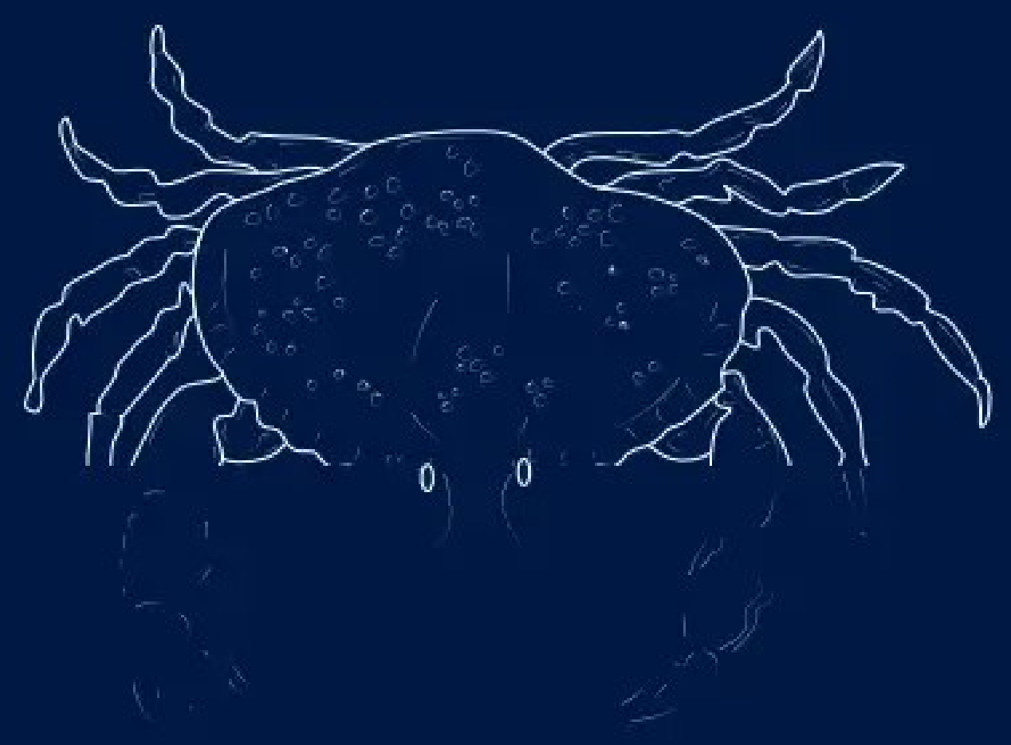
PLAICE

Plueronectes platessa



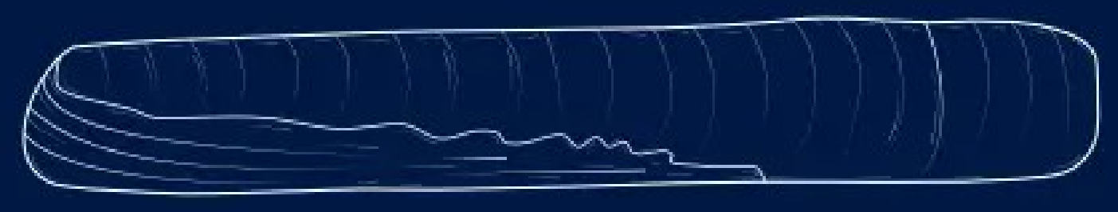
MEGRIM

Lepidorhombus whiffiagonis



BROWN CRAB

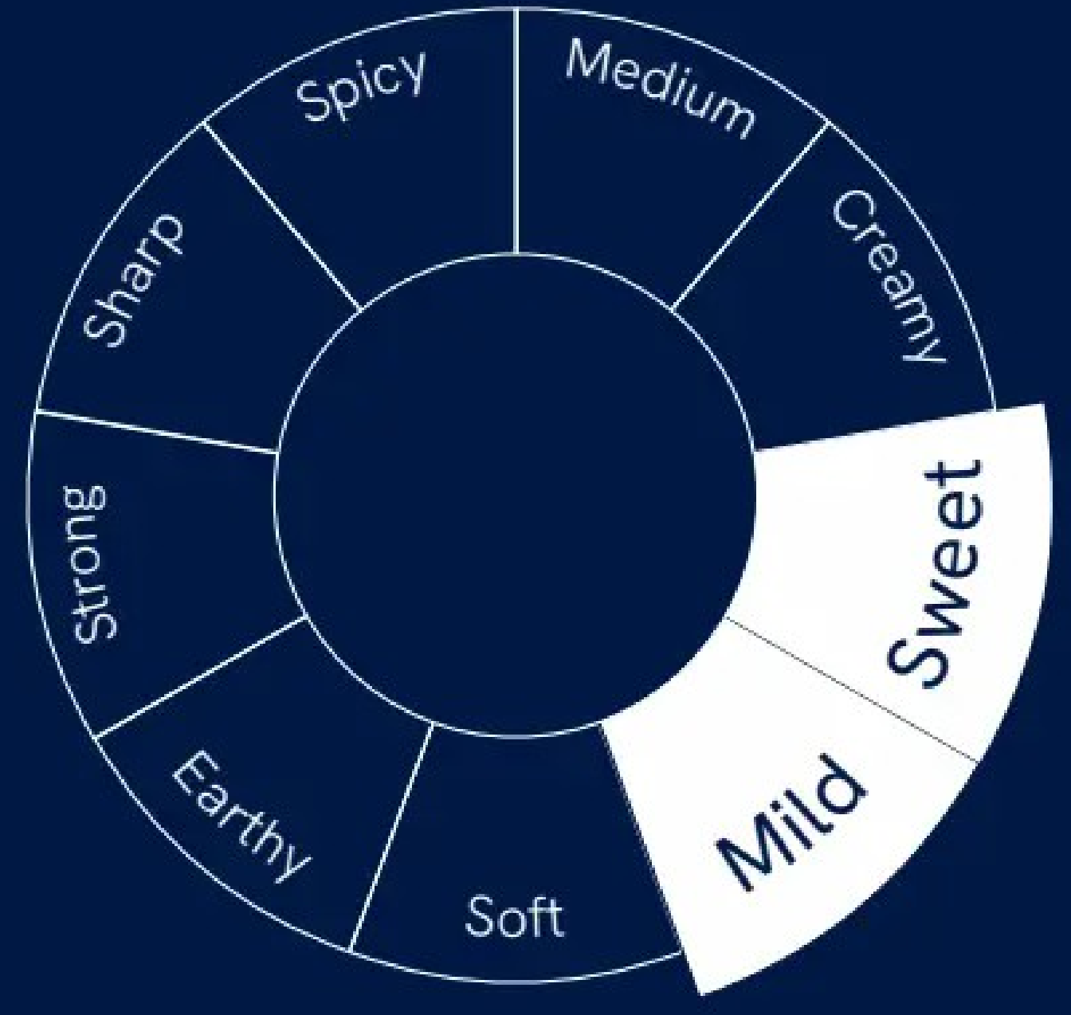
Cancer pagurus



RAZOR CLAMS

Solenidae

FLAVOUR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Strong
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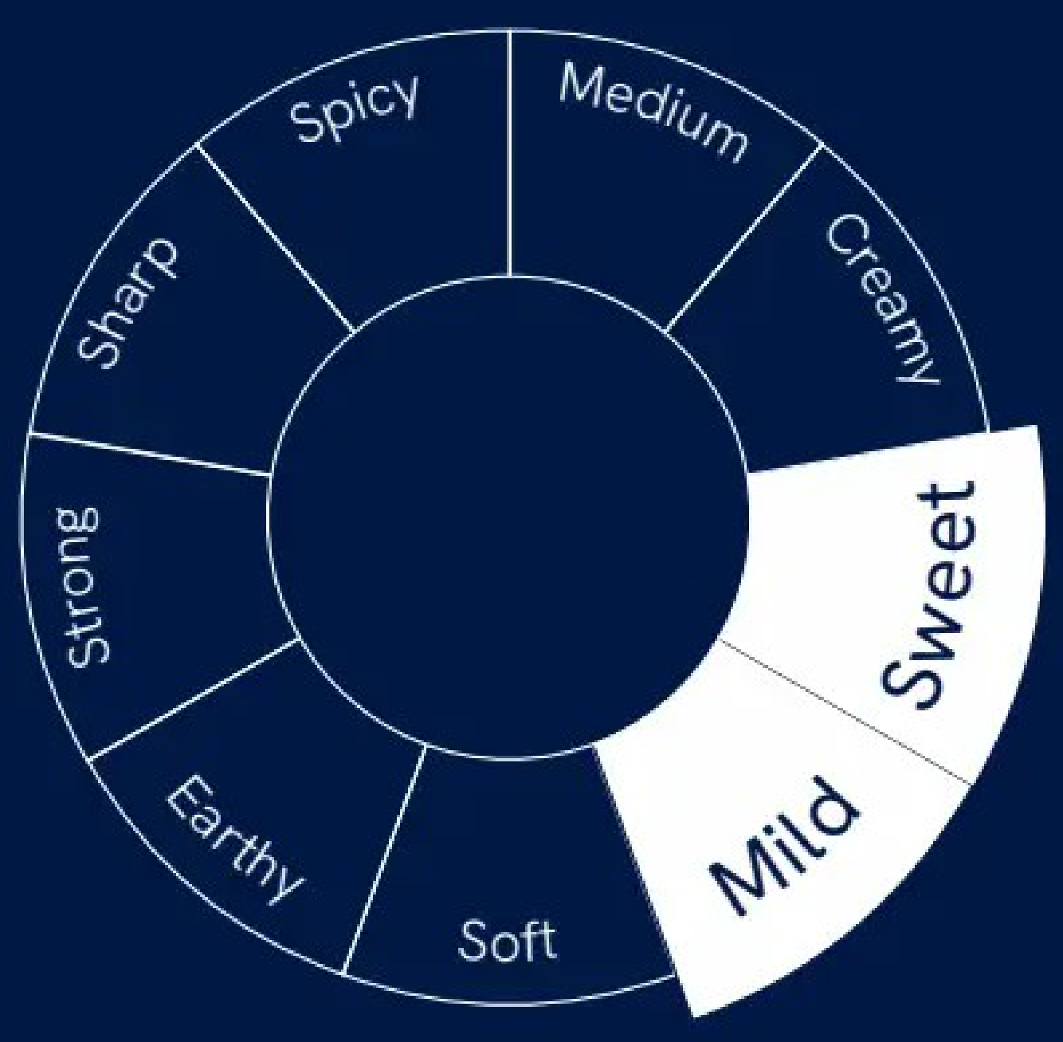
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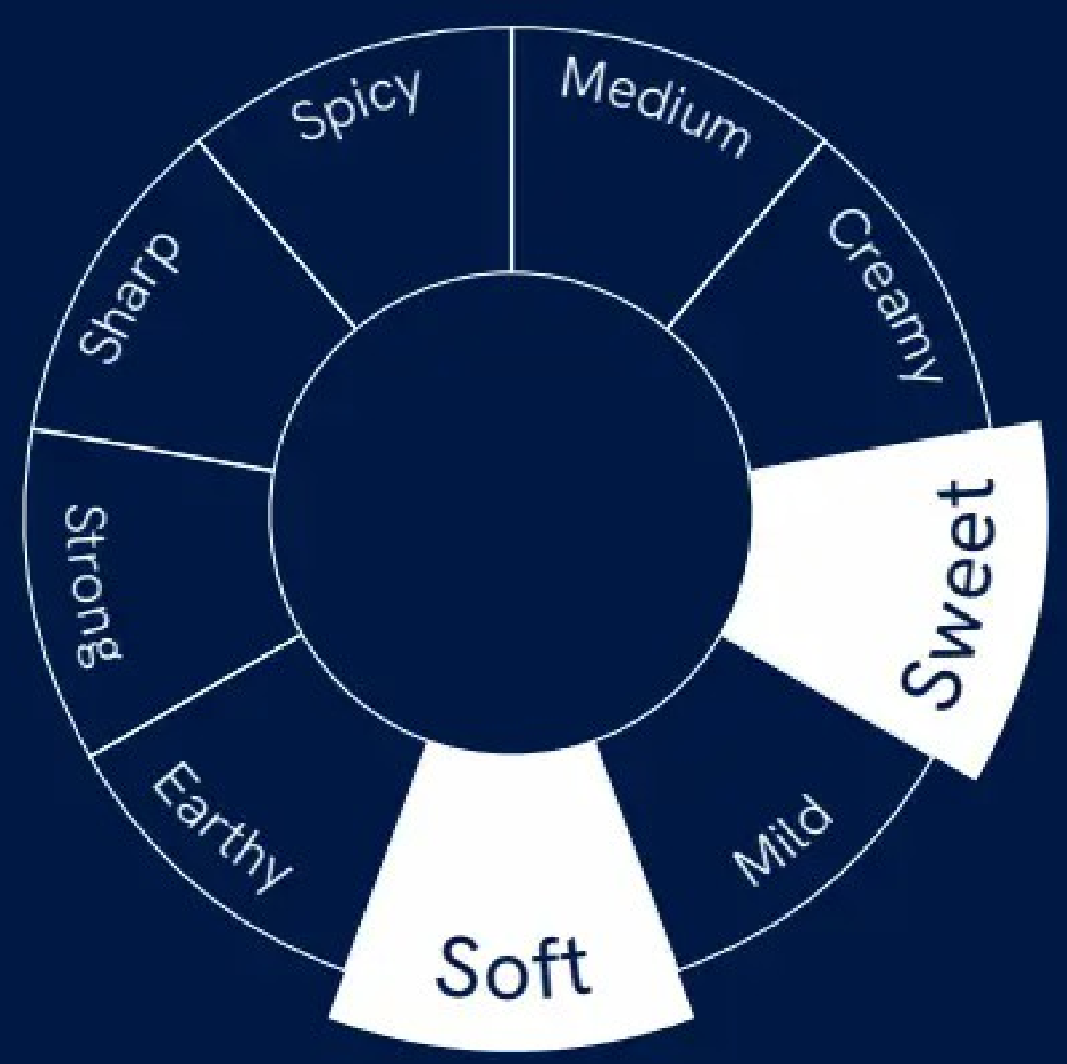
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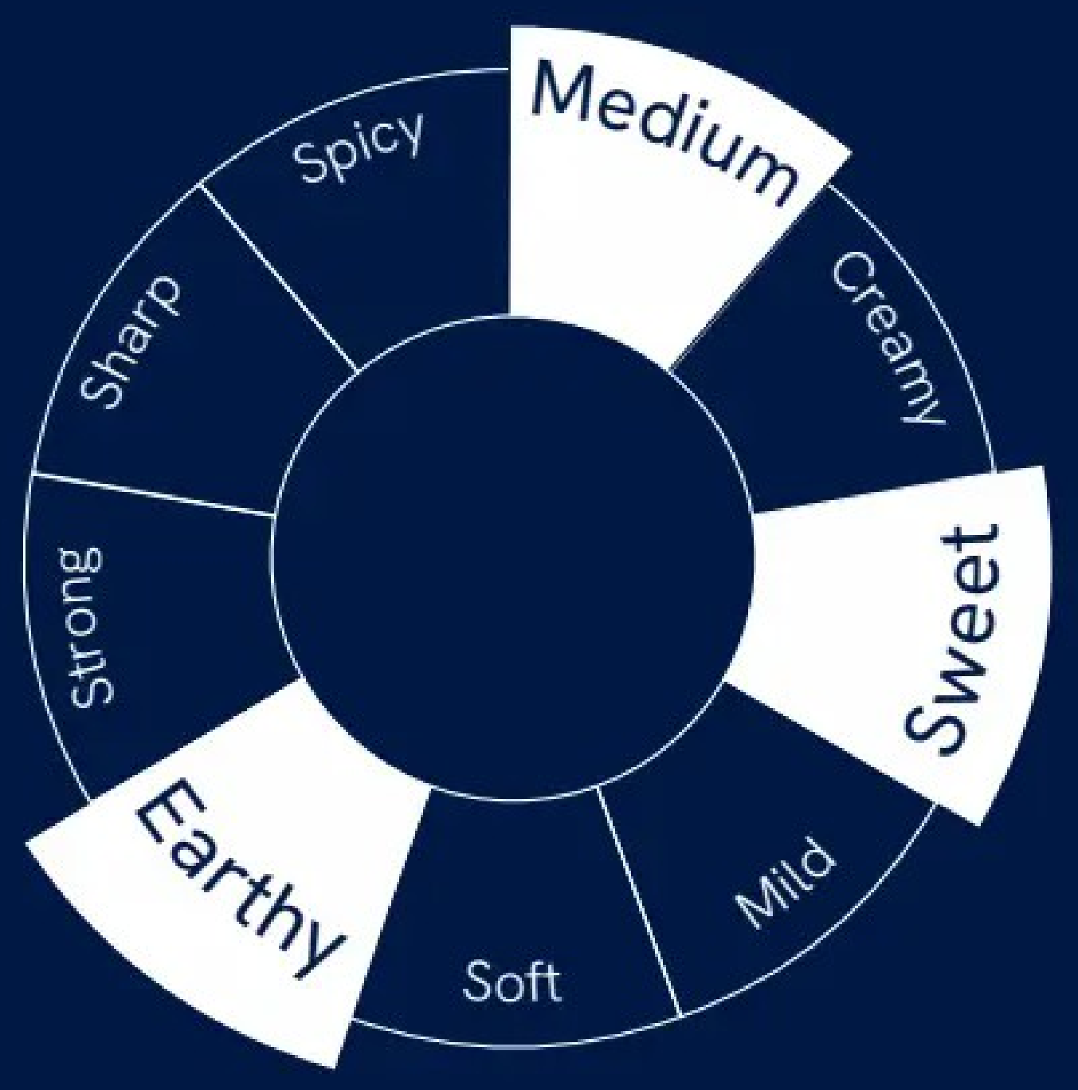
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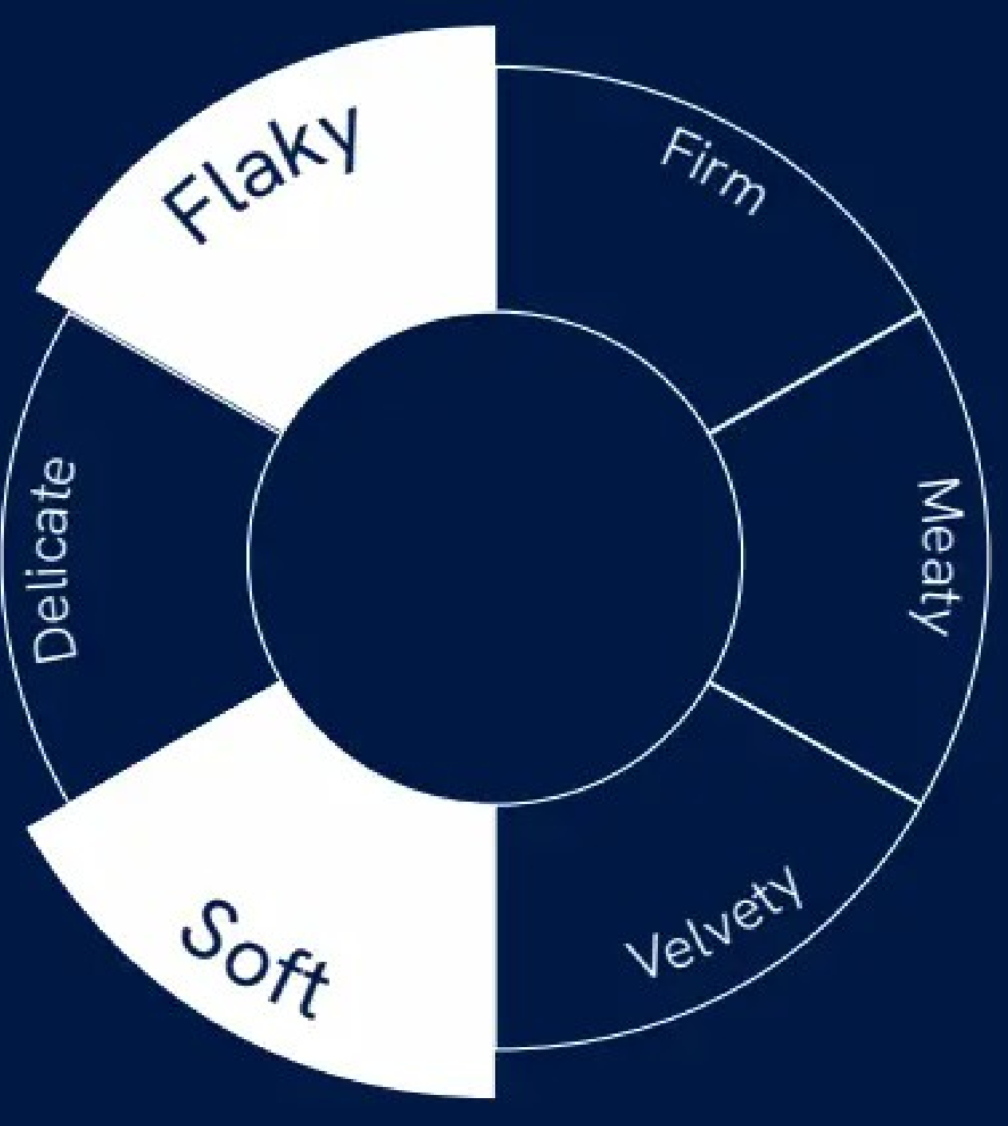
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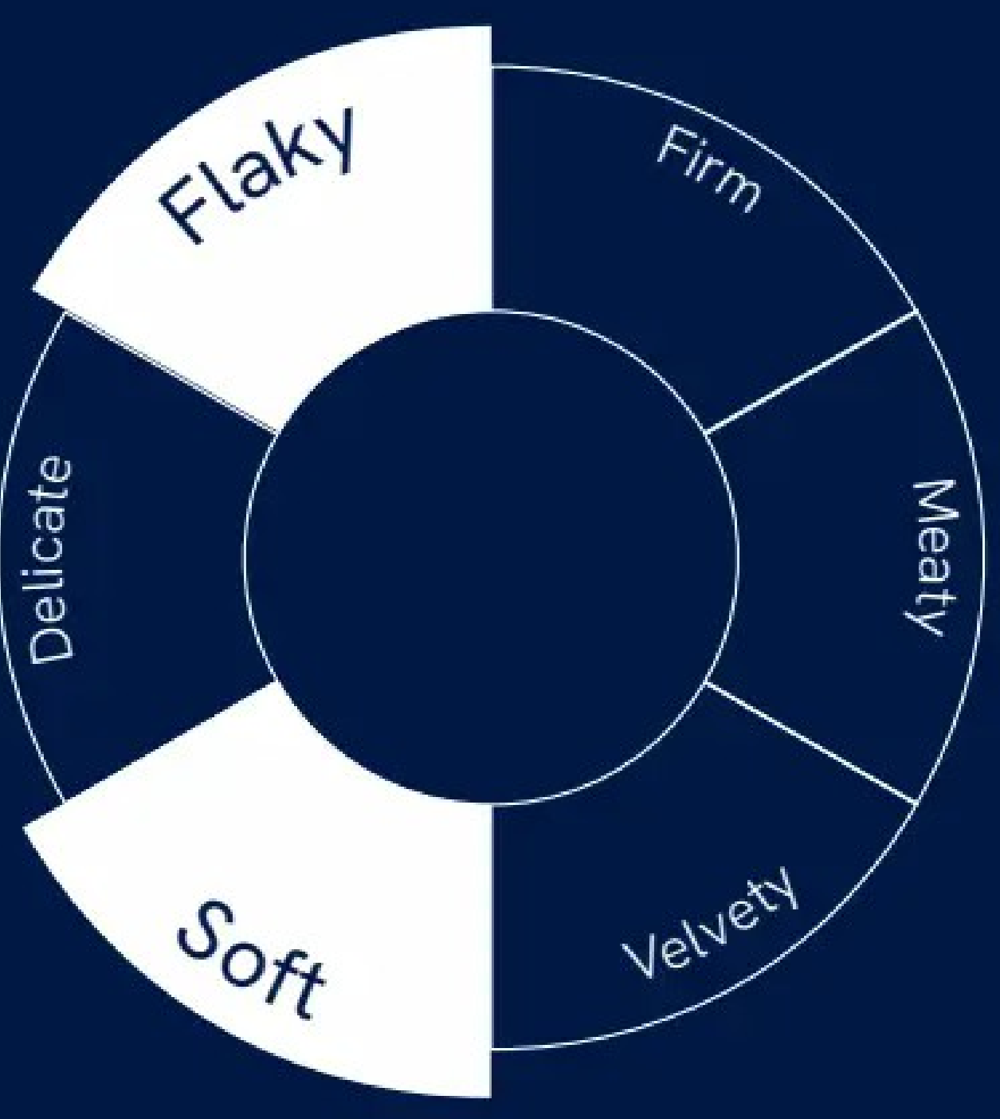
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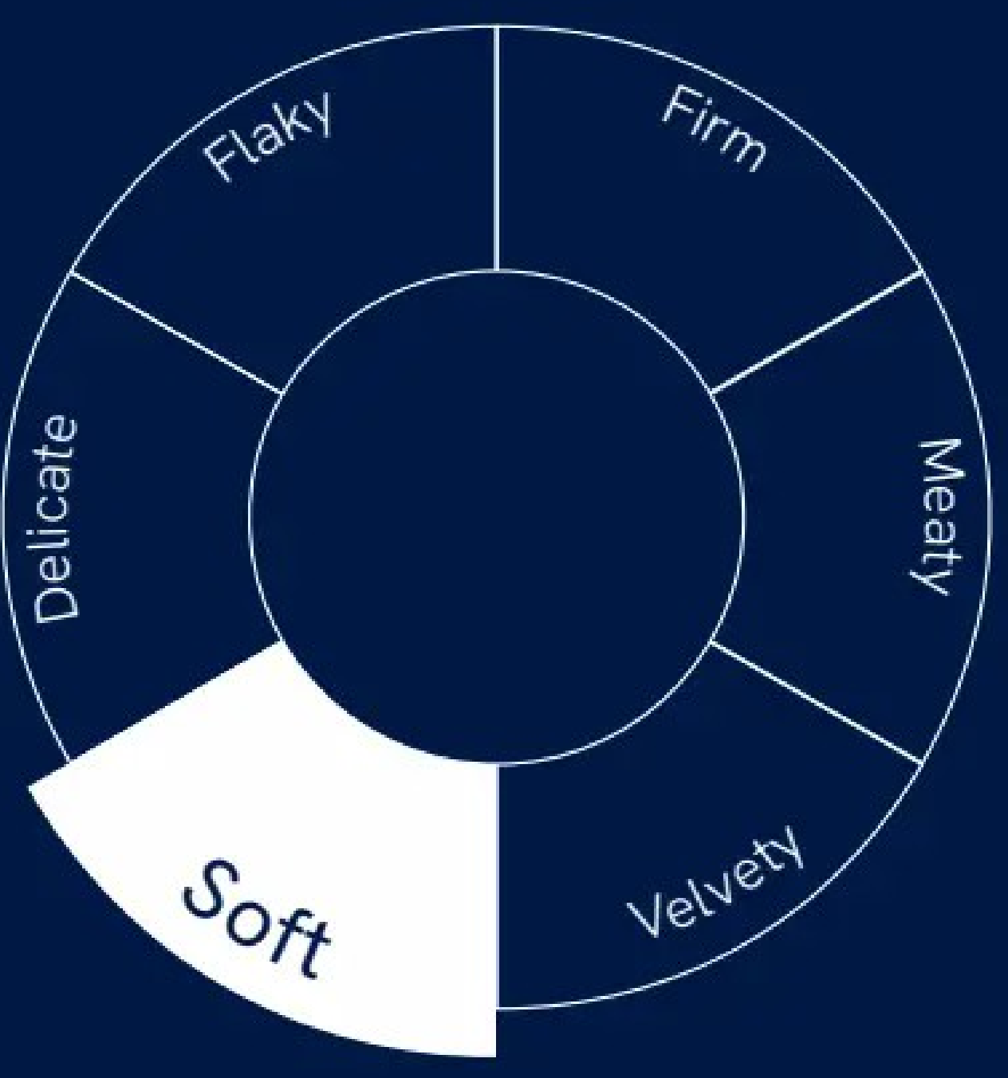
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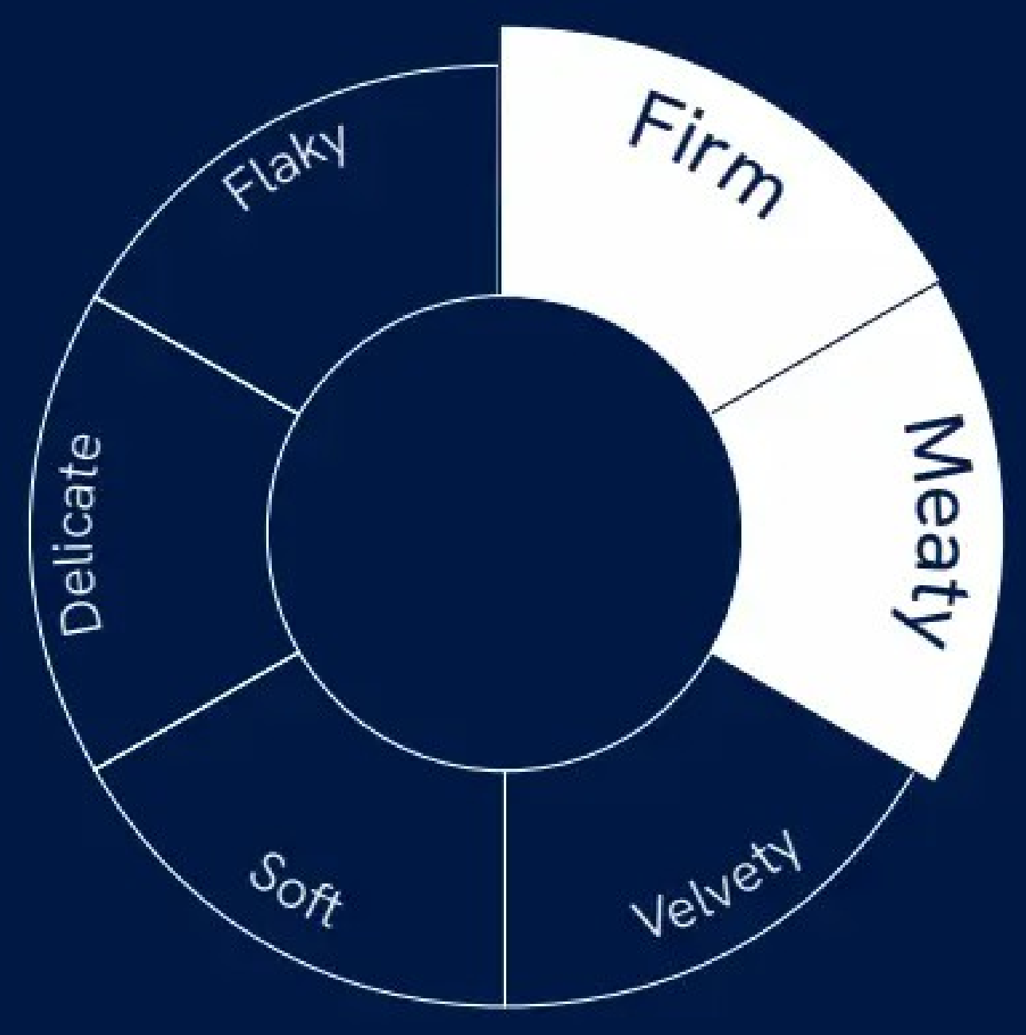
Flaky
Firm
Meaty
Velvety
Soft
Delicate

GOES WELL WITH

Creamy, sharp and spicy flavours such as:

avocado ▪ citrus ▪ white wine ▪ horseradish ▪ cream cheese ▪ dill ▪ ginger ▪ soy

Creamy, sharp and delicate flavours such as:

capers ▪ tarragon ▪ citrus ▪ roasted ▪ vegetables ▪ parmesan ▪ cream

Strong and spicy flavours such as:

chilli ▪ citrus ▪ bacon ▪ pickled vegetables ▪ cayenne pepper ▪ caper

Strong, bright and fresh flavours such as:

citrus ▪ white wine ▪ tomato ▪ garlic ▪ parsley ▪ capers ▪ cayenne pepper ▪ chilli

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SEAFOOD FROM SCOTLAND

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RAZZAMATAZZ: RASPBERRY, TONKA, TOMATO
BY GRAHAM MAIRS PASTRY CHEF

HONEYBERRY AND MELISA CRESS SEMI FREDDO WITH SUMMER MIX GRANOLA, BASIL MERINGUE, BLACKBERRY
BY STEVE WALPOLE

ROASTED LEEK AND CAVIAR
BY STEFAN JÄCKEL

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Words Claire Bosi
Camera John Carey

TOM BROWN

AT THE CAPITAL

LOVE

“When footballer Cristiano Ronaldo trained, he famously wore ankle weights. He did that so when he took them off to play, he felt freer when he was running. I feel a bit like that. Having worked where space was so tight and been restricted on what I could realistically achieve. I now feel free, with space to breathe and grow

WHEN TOM BROWN FIRST LEFT OUTLAWS AT THE CAPITAL, HE LEFT A CHEF. IN THE 6 YEARS THAT FOLLOWED WITH HIS OWN RESTAURANT, CORNERSTONE, HE BECAME A RESTAURATEUR. WHILE HIS FOCUS BEGAN WITH SERVING THE FINEST SEAFOOD DISHES, HIS OUTLOOK NOW TAKES IN THE FULL DINING EXPERIENCE.

TOM BROWN
AT THE CAPITAL

TOM BROWN
AT THE CAPITAL

Lunch Menu

15th April 2025

3 Courses
£50

Bream, soy, quail egg

or

Mackerel, hazelnut, rhubarb

~

Cod, asparagus, roast chicken

or

Plaice, smoked eel butter

~

Chocolate, olive oil, caper

or

Alphonso mango, pistachio, lime

Please inform us if you have any food allergies or dietary requirements.

A 15% discretionary service charge will be applied to the final bill

---

TOM BROWN
AT THE CAPITAL

Lunch Menu

15th April 2025

6 Courses
£75

Oyster, seaweed, toast

Bread and charcuterie

Tuna, soy, quail egg

Crab custard, pink grapefruit

Bass, roast chicken, asparagus

Alphonso mango, pistachio, lime

Sweets

Please inform us if you have any food allergies or dietary requirements.

A 15% discretionary service charge will be applied to the final bill

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TOM BROWN
AT THE CAPITAL

Lunch Menu

15th April 2025

8 Courses
£100

Mussel, port, beetroot

Oyster, seaweed, toast

Bread and charcuterie

Tuna, soy, quail egg

Crab custard, pink grapefruit

Bass, roast chicken, asparagus

Alphonso mango, pistachio, lime

Sweets

Please inform us if you have any food allergies or dietary requirements.

A 15% discretionary service charge will be applied to the final bill

As we sit to chat in the bar at The Capital, just one week before the opening of Tom Brown at The Capital, I can't help but notice he sees everything. Tom Brown 2025 reacts and responds the way of a true Chef Patron. The guest who doesn't know where they're going? He jumps up to help. The music played throughout the restaurant? He chooses it. The dressing of the dining room? Yep, down to his personal choice. A heater poking out behind a sofa in the bar that doesn't need to be there? He spots it.

Chef Tom Brown is back. Back to where so much of it all began. But this time, Tom Brown at The Capital is coming back a restaurateur. With renewed vigour, a stall to set out and that familiar glint in his eye you just know, this restaurant is going to be super special.

"I just want to get open now' he begins, "I have been here since January to get everything ready. My biggest concern was recruitment – it could be a nightmare in East London – so I thought it might be a complete pain in the arse. But, you know, I can't believe how well it went. Everyone who applied to work with me has a one or two Michelin star background. And the whole team just have these unbelievable attitudes. Today, I have three of the chefs rota'd off. But they have all decided to come in regardless. They all want to be here, to be part of something special. It's an amazing feeling shared by the whole team."

He seems surprised that there was such an influx of chefs wanting to work alongside him. With many venues struggling to attract the right talent, Tom Brown recruited, with relatable ease, a stellar brigade set up. Some have returned to him from Cornerstone, some are new to working alongside him. And it appears to me, that a love affair is about to reignite. The love between Chef Tom

Brown and his team. Because having to part ways with his team at his former restaurant, Cornerstone, was one of his worst life experiences.

"After losing my dad. Closing Cornerstone was the second worst moment of my life. There were days after we closed, when I went into the building by myself and sat on the kitchen floor for hours, just really upset. I thought about everything, how my family had helped fund the restaurant in the beginning, how I had brought really sentimental things into the space like my grandmother's clock. Cornerstone was more than a restaurant to me, it all felt so personal. When I left Outlaw's to open Cornerstone, I was just a chef. When I opened my own place, everyone knew me as Chef Tom Brown. I found my identity. Losing Cornerstone, I lost myself for a bit. I felt like I had lost my identity. Am I someone else? Am I even me anymore without that place?

"I know it sounds like some sort of cliche. But my team at Cornerstone, James and Aaron, Kelly and Alex and all the others - they were my family. Everyone was so invested in the place. I felt like I had let them down. We had six amazing years, but the economic climate and, in part, the location, didn't help. Losing my team, saying goodbye, watching them go on to work elsewhere was a massive wrench.

"When it became clear that Cornerstone had had its day and needed to close, I had absolutely no idea what I was going to do next. I was mostly focused on making sure my team were okay. I had no plan for me. Luckily, I had Pearly Queen as a bit of a distraction – that was a big help."

He thought about leaving the UK altogether and heading out to Mexico, "My brother lives there, so there was already a base if I needed it. I was so down on the UK, couldn't see any upturn happening in the economy anytime soon. Pearly Queen has an amazing team who don't really need me, and I don't draw any salary from there. It was terrifying to suddenly have no job. I was borrowing money to pay my rent – so why stay in the UK? I seriously considered just leaving'

Fortunately, Tom only flirted with the idea of emigrating. For within a few months, an email landed in his inbox. One which is about to change his life.

TOM BROWN
AT THE CAPITAL

"The Capital Hotel, Knightsbridge were looking for someone to take lead on their restaurant. The owners, Warwick Hotels & Resorts, were aware of my history working there. Would I be interested in coming back and relaunching the dining room under my name?

"I could feel it. Straight away, I knew it was right. I remember when I was looking for a site for Cornerstone years ago, nothing I visited felt like the place I wanted. Gary Usher said to me, "when you find the right place, you'll know it straight away" and I did. The same thing happened with The Capital. I could feel this was the perfect move. A homecoming. Full circle. Back to the place that was my foundation.

"Obviously, I already knew the layout, the setup of the kitchens, the private dining rooms and the restaurant from my time as head chef of Outlaws at The Capital. I had a wish list of what I wanted to do, the size and location of the next restaurant I wanted. The Capital ticked all the boxes, and it already held such great memories.

"I knew coming back here to The Capital was exactly the right thing. I felt like I learned so much during Cornerstone that I had more to offer than just being the chef, and that is what I want. To be over it all. And what I have learnt more than anything during those years of running my own place, is that in some respects, the food is the last thing you need to get right. And that's me, as a chef, saying that!

"To an extent that realisation happened at Cornerstone. We were right in the middle of that room, you could see, operationally, how everything worked. You could see guests' reactions, read their moods – are they having a good time or not? If they looked a bit moody, I would take a dish over, chat with them. Suddenly everyone's happy again.

"Everything surrounding the food needs to be perfect. A diner won't forgive the lighting being too bright, poor service, uncomfortable surroundings or terrible music. If your ambience, aesthetic and service are a 10 and your food is a 5 – your restaurant will be busy. You could have the best food in the world – but if you've got crappy, uncaring service, lights that blind the dining space or just deliver an uncomfortable customer experience – diners won't come back. That is what I learnt at Cornerstone. And this is my mindset from the start at Tom Brown at The Capital. Leading up to the opening, I have

been working on all the systems, looking at everything from top to bottom.

"We want to deliver an amazing menu, and we will. The food we are going to do, I believe, is pretty groundbreaking. I can't wait to serve up some of the dishes we have been working on. But it needs to be a great restaurant too, because this is The Capital Hotel. It's an iconic 5-star hotel with a history of having great restaurants."

The restaurant at The Capital does, indeed, have a history of housing some incredible chef-led dining rooms. Brian Turner and Richard Shepherd were present in the 70's, receiving a Michelin star. Gary Rhodes and Paul Merret both cooked here. In 1999 Eric Chavot took the reins, famously being awarded 2 Michelin stars before Nathan Outlaw launched Outlaws at The Capital in 2013, also receiving a Michelin star which Tom then held as head chef. But since the departure of Outlaws at the Capital in 2018, the restaurant has been operating as a hotel restaurant. This is all about to change. The Capital Hotel is about to rejoin its 5-star hotel peers by bringing an unforgettable dining experience back to a space temporarily forgotten.

"There is definitely room in the market for hotel restaurants, and I do believe that – given the economic situation we are now in – when you want to do food at the high-end of the market, ideally you need to be able to back that up with another revenue stream. Having somewhere with rooms, a breakfast service, two private dining rooms and a bar – all these things allow us to really go for it with the food. And one of the things I wanted to do was be able to keep our prices reasonable. For me, it's important that a young chef should be able to afford to come along and dine with us.

"I am keeping to the same ethos that I had at Cornerstone. Fish and Seafood dominate. But the food will be more refined. At Cornerstone, it was more of a sharing concept. We did small plates before everyone else started saying small plates and it became a fucking buzzword! At Tom Brown at The Capital, we're going individual plates, more elegant.

"We are in Knightsbridge now, so we have to deliver something a bit more elevated than we did in Hackney. It's funny, often people say that I do something "new or different" but I don't, really. I like classic stuff, and I think all our flavour combinations are classic. We're doing a John Dory, with a chicken and morel farci, wrapped in leeks with asparagus, peas, broad beans and chicken jus. These are classics and I love them. I don't like dishes where you wonder what the fuck is going on. I just like to cook amazing ingredients that work well together and are delicious."

Space. Something he was short of in Hackney, is plentiful in Knightsbridge and this has given Tom the opportunity to work on projects he found challenging with the restrictions of a far smaller site.

"Cornerstone, as much as I loved it, was always restricted by the size of the kitchen. Here at The Capital, we have space, and this means I can work on more things. I always wanted to explore deeper with our house made charcuterie at Cornerstone, but we just didn't have the room to fully develop it. We were doing our salmon pastrami in the service fridges. Now we have large double-door fridges used solely for our charcuterie, we can develop and experiment with our charcuterie a lot more. We have the restaurant kitchen for service, and an upstairs kitchen for development and mis-en-place. We have storage space, a dedicated fish and seafood prep room and a large pastry section. All this together is going to make such a difference, not just to how we work, but to how much more space me and the team have to develop dishes.

"When footballer Cristiano Ronaldo trained, he famously wore ankle weights. He did that so when he took them off to play, he felt freer when he was running. I feel a bit like that. Having worked where space was so tight, and been

TOM BROWN
AT THE CAPITAL

restricted on what I could realistically achieve, after the pain of losing Cornerstone and losing myself for a bit, coming to The Capital feels like some kind of healing. I feel free, with space to breathe and grow'

Though he now has the luxury of space and budget, Tom is conscious not to "piss money up the wall with equipment and things." He has been given budgets to stick to for the refit and has been considerate about where to spend the money, "I justify everything I spend as though it is my own money. I don't buy 40 plates and keep 10 in the back in case one breaks. We buy 12 and just wash them up quicker. I don't have duplicate equipment sitting in the basement, ready to switch if something gets broken in the kitchen. We look after our kit. But we have been able to buy bits of kit that we could never have afforded before, either financially or in terms of space – and that is going to be a game changer, it will really help to elevate our food, push things on."

It goes without question, that Tom and his team must prove themselves worthy of the investment by Warwick Hotels & Resorts, "Look, no owner lets anyone run a business at a loss. We must prove ourselves. Our first aim is to be a successful business. And I think what we do is quite unique, certainly in this country.

"There are people who inspire us a lot. The Australian chef Josh Niland is a constant. And, funnily enough, Josh's head chef, Joe Greenwood was an apprentice with me here at The Capital when it was Outlaw's in 2015. I sent him down to work in Cornwall after finishing with me, now he is in Australia with Josh. There are definitely some chefs around the world who inspire us by what they do, but Tom Brown at The Capital is going to be offering something very different to other restaurants in the UK."

Famously a chef who loves the East London vibe, coming back to Knightsbridge is "so bougie' he laughs, "I still live in East London, I love the place. But it's nice to bring some character to Knightsbridge. I think that it is important to bring an identity to our restaurant, regardless of the menu. I think people have to spot some of our familiarity. Tom Brown at The Capital has got to have some personality. The service, music, decor it needs to feel like an extension of me. All the best places I have visited, all the best restaurants are an extension of the chef –

TOM BROWN
AT THE CAPITAL

from start to finish. Paul Ainsworth at No.6 is a great example of that. Every single thing in that restaurant, you feel him and his personality.

"When I left Outlaws, I was 29. I wanted to be in East London – the cool part of town. I still love the area, but I feel like, now I am almost 38, that I have grown up a bit. Something like The Capital suits me now. People do grow up, and they do change. If you just try and stay the same that's boring, right?

"I'm very lucky to have Pearly Queen when I want to satisfy that East London itch! If I'm knocking around, I will pop in, have some oysters and a couple of cocktails. Paddy Maher, Pearly's head chef is fucking unbelievable, he runs away with the menu on his own now. An amazing chef, Paddy is a big part of why I can do Tom Brown at The Capital now."

While making his name at Cornerstone, it could have been easy to label Tom Brown as a chef who only supports British produce. And while he does champion the very best the UK has to offer, he is not disinclined to buy from overseas

if the quality cannot be matched over here. "I love Irish produce. In fact, I just love the best produce. I don't want to be pencilled into this Britishness movement. I find it obtuse. For example, the one everyone loves - the Cornish Bluefin Tuna. Everyone raves about it, and I have seen some amazing dishes with it. But we're buying our tuna from Chris at Notting Hill Fish Shop. It's fucking unreal. I've never tasted tuna like it and it's from Cartagena, Spain.

"The tuna are shepherded into deep sea pens and then fed to fatten them up. They are still wild, but don't swim as much as they would outside of the pens. So, they are getting well fed and a bit lazier. The result is more fat on the fish. More flavour.

"If you think about it, you wouldn't necessarily want to eat a wild cow, would you? No, because you always fatten livestock up towards the end. Then you want them slaughtered in as humane a way as possible, so there's no lactic acid buildup, no stress. That's what I get from Chris at Notting Hill Fish Shop – tuna that is well fed and not stressed."

Of course, Cornerstone held a Michelin star for several years and all eyes will now be on Tom Brown at The Capital for the 2026 Michelin GB&I reveal. It's something he wants, but his

first focus is on his paying guests, there is no time to be wasted trying to beat a system which has remained so consistently hard to catch for decades, and he wouldn't want to, anyway.

"The number of times I've been sent this big PDF file that everyone passes around with all the assumed names/numbers/pictures of Michelin inspectors. I think that's wrong. Not necessarily because it's cheating. But why should an inspector get a better experience than the 18-year-old kid who's saved up to come here?

"I remember, back at Outlaws, we had an inspection when I was first here. It was the first time that I'd ever had an announced inspection after a meal. They came for lunch. Then afterwards this guy came in the kitchen and announced he was an inspector.

"When he left, I phoned Pete, who was the head chef here before me. I said, "fucking hell, I didn't even know they were here" Pete just replied with "but what would you have done differently, had you known? If you're good enough, you're good enough."

"That stuck with me. Every single diner deserves the best we can do, regardless of who they might be.

"Maturity has also given me perspective. As a younger chef, I used to write menus that I thought Michelin wanted to see. Because they then printed the guides, I would get to a point when I knew the inspections must have

finished and I would just feel this relief that I couldn't do any more. The angst was off my mind. Over time, I realised everything improved when that book was off my mind. The food got better; the menus got better – because I was just thinking about what was good – not what I thought the inspectors wanted to see. Since then, I have just created menus that represent my cuisine.

"I often wonder if that is why there are fewer stars in the UK than there should be. Are some chefs still doing what I used to do – not thinking in the sense of what is good, but thinking they need to tick some kind of unknown criteria for a guidebook? That's the opposite of what it should be and that's the opposite of what will get you a star.

"I stick to our own criteria - authenticity, talent, consistency, and a love of the craft. I mean, I might be a million miles away, but for me, those are the things that resonate.'

HERE'S JOHNNY!

"We predominantly use Flying Fish. That's our go-to. And, do you know, the thing with fish is that it is not necessarily about where it's from. It's how it's caught, how it's packed, how it gets to you.

"It is an understanding between chef and supplier. The fish that comes out of the sea all goes to the market one way. Obviously, seasonality is involved, and you might get a bigger mackerel from one part of the coast to another, but at the end of the day it is a living animal inside the sea and when it is caught, more or less the same wherever it is from.

"The most important thing is having a supplier that understands you, your needs and your specifications. Someone that is honest with you. For example, we were doing some development on the John Dory dish. I asked Johnny for some Dory and he said no. Though the season was just coming in, he didn't feel it was good enough yet. Having that honesty from your supplier is key. Especially with fish. You can't do anything without the quality of the product.

"We use Portland for Crabs and some shellfish, then of course our Scallops come from Orkney – because they are the best. Our Oysters are

IS·YOURS

from Carlingford in Ireland, again that is a supplier who I know and trust completely.'

ON OYSTERS

"I hated Oysters when I was young. I couldn't stand them. Then, when I was older, I was away somewhere, and oysters were served. I thought, "oh go on then, I'll have one." Since then, I have loved oysters. I think they're the perfect thing to have at the start of a meal, nothing beats it. And, I don't know, they're sexy, aren't they...?

"Being an oyster farmer is a hard job; there is so much manual labour involved. I visit Carlingford at least once a year and they do it extremely well. I have no idea how many different varieties of oysters I have used over the years, but Carlingford's Louët-Feisser oysters are the best. Every single oyster shell is the perfect shape. The oyster inside is just so plump, you open it and it's like, popping out of the shell. That is a result of the care and attention Carlingford put into their oyster farming'

ON SUPPLIERS

"I love visiting my suppliers. My rule is I don't buy anything from someone I wouldn't sit down and have a pint with. I like communication, understanding and honesty. We talk; we both understand one another's specifications and my suppliers are honest with me. If I want something and the quality isn't right – they'll tell me. Thornicrofts of London and Natoora, they're both great companies. They take the time to pop by with a box of stuff to leave with us – just for inspiration. That's what I need from suppliers, them telling me what is coming in, what's good, what's new.

"My one thing is if a supplier tries to piss me around, I just delete the account. I drop it. I can't be bothered with haggling. I can't be bothered with someone doing a shit job. Everyone makes mistakes right, and that's fine. But if someone doesn't work on my level, or tries to pull the wool over my eyes, I can't be bothered. I find it insulting when a supplier comes back after you have complained, saying they will just change a product they have sent you. If they have tried to send you something below par, hoping you will just accept it, they can fuck off. If you're good enough, you're good enough, if you're not, then good-bye.'

BREAD AND BUTTER

"What we're doing here with bread, I think is very much a thing these days. We're making a bread course, so it's proper.

"We're doing two types of bread. A roasted bao. It's a bao dough recipe that we had at Cornerstone, and we use it at Pearly Queen too. It's delicious. I think the recipe is from Tom Spenceley, or it could be Gaz (Gareth Ward) - it was one of them, anyway.

"We steam the Bao in a little mold. Once it's steamed, we roast it in crab oil. It is crispy, and you get all the crabbiness in it. Then we're doing a Guinness and seaweed soda bread. We've got crab oil and balsamic vinegar for dipping, a lobster butter and then a green olive tapenade, finished with these little salted pilchards. Cornish sardines, salted for six weeks and preserved in oil. We serve little slices of those. Anchovy pilchards, we call them in Cornwall."

ON ALLOWING HIS CHEFS TO SHINE

"Having Paddy at Pearly Queen means that I can focus on this restaurant. In the same way when I had Cornerstone, James Toth, my head chef was a big reason why I could open Pearly Queen. Having these chefs who are so talented and just get it, get the ethos - yet bring no ego – is incredible. Sometimes young chefs don't understand that it is a collaboration. We work together. I would never say to them "this is my dish" or "this is your dish" because we work together.

"I have never understood those chefs who do not allow their chefs to shine. If you don't afford chefs the right to grow in their own way, why would they stay with you? Look at Kelly Cullen, one of my proudest things is watching her career. I don't think I have taught her anything, she knew it all already. To watch her career blossom, how well she is doing – that feels like such an achievement for me. The pastry chef who replaced Kelly - Laura – she's now head pastry chef at Kol. Aaron Dunning he has gone off to work in Copenhagen. Alex Parker, when he left Cornerstone he went to The Harwood, now he is back with me as senior sous chef. I want my chefs to shine and will do whatever it takes to allow them the chance to do that – whether that is giving them the recognition they deserve while they are with me or supporting them when they leave to develop their careers."

TOM BROWN

AT THE CAPITAL

ON SMALL BUT PERFECT

The service kitchen at Tom Brown at The Capital will become a part of the whole dining experience with guests invited into the space for their pre-dinner snacks. They will meet the team, absorb some of the atmosphere and build some anticipation for the meal that is to come. The lighting has been adjusted from the brightness you would typically find in a kitchen to something more subtle, "I don't want guests entering from a softly lit bar into a blazing strip light lit, stainless steel kitchen', Tom laughs, "so the lighting in the kitchen must be sexier and warmer. We have the pass lights, and some under counter strip lights. But yeah, the guests will be able to chat with chefs and ask questions."

"My team is small, and I like that. I think it is good to put some responsibility on people, and you certainly get that in a small brigade. I have 9 chefs in total, but we are 4 on service. We oversee all the F&B in the hotel now, and part of the recruitment drive was the whole team buying into being a part of the whole operation. Of course, the flagship restaurant is the key focus. But we also manage the breakfast, room service and private dining rooms. We budgeted for chefs to cover room service and breakfast, but the wider team rotate, including me. Just saying – my eggs benedict are top draw..."

"Giving chefs responsibility is way more inspiring for them than just being at the end of the pass, picking herbs. I don't want that. Plus, a small team during service, they begin to work with this choreography, as if they are thinking from one brain. For service we have one on sauce, one on pastry, one on larder, one on pass. Chefs will come and finish dishes at the table during service too. Me included.'

ON ADAM BYATT

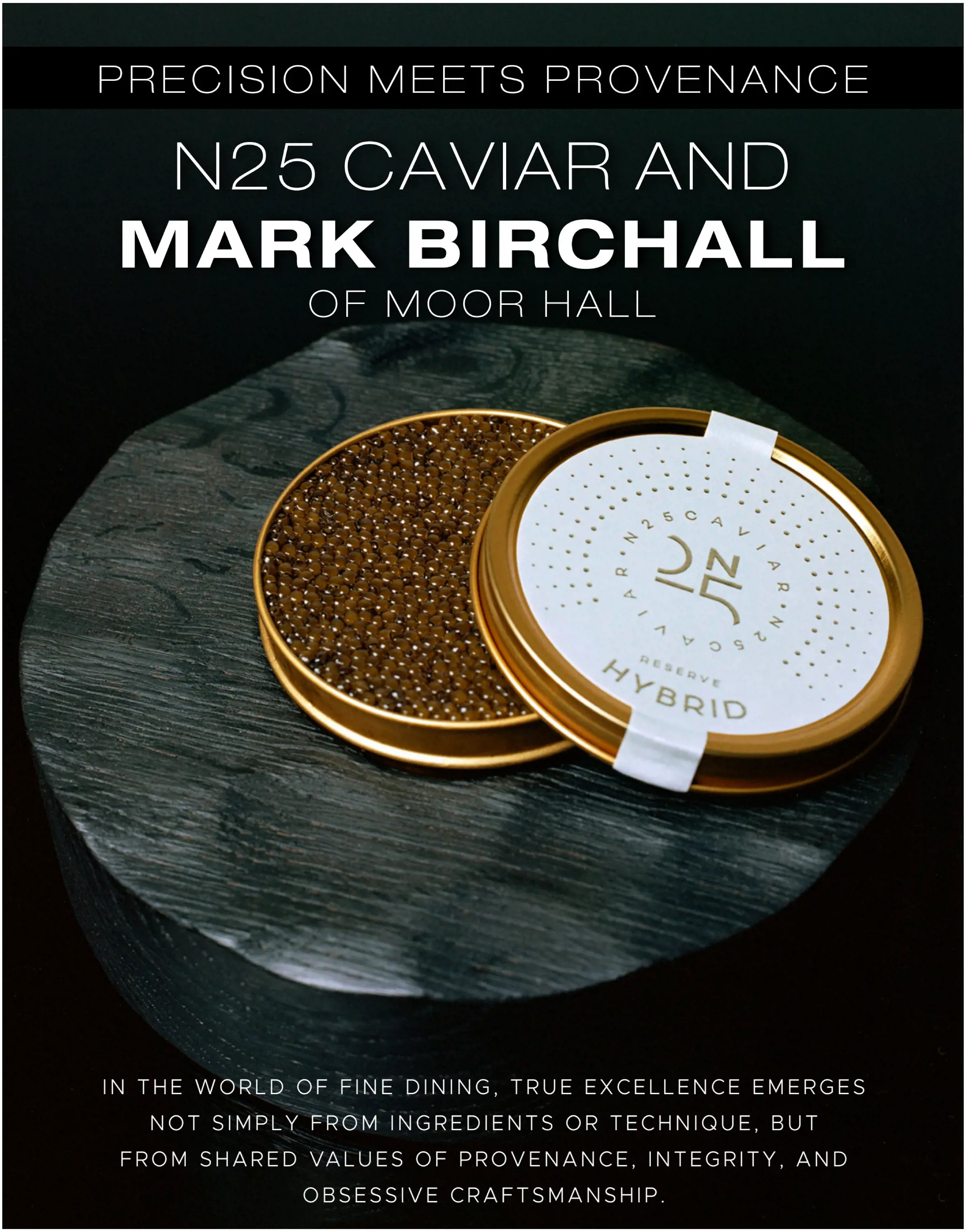
"Adam is clearly one of the fucking best cooks that has ever come out of this country. What he doesn't know about cooking – fucking forget it. But, you know, he said that as he got older, or progressed more, that his skill was in setting up kitchens with really good teams, then looking after the things above that. I like to work in that way now. I have got all these amazing young guns in my team. I tell them an idea, then they run away and go make it. Then we look at it together and adjust if needed."

ON WORKING WITH NATHAN OUTLAW.

"I loved every day I worked with Nathan. I thought his food was the best I'd ever seen anywhere. He only had good traits. There is nothing I could say that could be a detriment to his character or ability as a chef. There are just loads of good stories and great memories. If I could be just 10% of the person Nathan is, I'd be winning. I hope I have taken on a lot of his traits. I hope I am like him."

PRECISION MEETS PROVENANCE

N25 CAVIAR AND
MARK BIRCHALL
OF MOOR HALL


N25 CAVIAR
N25 CAVIAR
N25
RESERVE
HYBRID

IN THE WORLD OF FINE DINING, TRUE EXCELLENCE EMERGES NOT SIMPLY FROM INGREDIENTS OR TECHNIQUE, BUT FROM SHARED VALUES OF PROVENANCE, INTEGRITY, AND OBSESSIVE CRAFTSMANSHIP.

These ideals lie at the heart of a new partnership between N25 Caviar, one of the most curated caviar producers in the world, and Chef Mark Birchall, the culinary force behind the newly three Michelin-starred Moor Hall in Lancashire.

This collaboration is far more than a name alignment. It is a meeting of philosophies; a shared commitment to the highest standards in both sourcing and expression

THE LEGACY OF MOOR HALL

Since opening in 2017, Moor Hall has become a beacon of British gastronomy. Nestled in the West Lancashire village of Aughton, the restaurant and its surrounding estate, anchored in a beautifully restored 13th-century manor house - have attracted national and international acclaim under the leadership of Chef Patron Mark Birchall and owners Andy and Tracey Bell.

The estate now includes The Barn at Moor Hall, a Michelin-starred relaxed elevated dining restaurant, along with a bar, lounge, private dining room, and fourteen thoughtfully designed guest rooms. Yet it is Birchall's distinctive culinary style - contemporary, refined, yet grounded in the land - that has turned Moor Hall into one of the UK's most significant culinary destinations.

A Lancashire native, Birchall's journey has taken him through the kitchens of Northcote, L'Enclume, and the legendary El Celler de Can Roca, before earning the prestigious Roux Scholarship in 2011. At Moor Hall, he has established a cuisine driven by a deep connection to the estate's gardens, local artisans, and a respect for time-honoured craft.

ENTER N25: A CAVIAR HOUSE LIKE NO OTHER

N25 Caviar has quickly built a reputation not just for excellence, but for a new standard of caviar production. Based on the principle that *only the finest will do*, the brand selects just the top 10% of each harvest to bear its signature. Sturgeons raised in high-altitude aquaculture environments fed by pristine mountain spring water, and roe refined through a meticulous ageing and strict grading process, N25 produces caviar of remarkable purity, complexity, and finesse.

The result is a product that doesn't overwhelm, it whispers. With lingering umami, precise salinity, and a mouthfeel that speaks to months of patient refinement, N25 is not just a garnish for a dish, it is a statement.

For discerning chefs, this attention to detail strikes a familiar chord. It's no surprise that N25 caviar now appears on the menus of some of the world's most respected restaurants and with Chef Mark Birchall joining as its newest brand ambassador, the partnership marks a high point in the brand's ongoing evolution.

SHARED VALUES, SHARED VISION

The relationship between N25 and Chef Birchall is anchored in three core values:

- **Craftsmanship**: As Birchall tends to his kitchen gardens with care and precision, N25 approaches aquaculture with the same discipline where every grain is a reflection of its origin.

- **Innovation**: Moor Hall challenges conventions of modern British cuisine; N25 disrupts traditional notions of caviar with its proprietary ageing and rigorous selection.

- **Flavour Integrity**: For both chef and caviar house, flavour is king - complex, balanced, and always in service of the whole.

As Birchall puts it,
"Caviar has to earn its place on the plate. With N25, the integrity of flavour is second to none. It's elegant, expressive and always in balance, it aligns with everything we stand for at Moor Hall."

N25 CAVIAR N25 CAVIAR
N25
RESERVE
HYBRID

A CONVERSATION WITH CHEF MARK BIRCHALL

To mark this new ambassadorship, N25 sat down with Chef Mark Birchall to discuss flavour, craft, and the nuances of working with one of the world's most refined caviars.

We are excited to have you as our newest N25 ambassador. Could you tell us why N25 is your choice of caviar?
I'm really pleased to be working with N25. Their approach aligns very closely with our philosophy at Moor Hall – it's about integrity, provenance, and allowing quality to speak for itself. What drew me to N25 was their commitment to transparency and craftsmanship. The caviar is handled with such care throughout its journey, from the water to the plate, and that's something which is really important to me. They share that obsession with detail that we live by every day in the kitchen.

Uniquely N25, the ageing process is crucial to the development of the complex flavours which last on the palate. How does aged caviar affect the dishes you create?
Ageing brings a depth that's quite remarkable – it adds nuance, almost a maturity to the caviar that you simply don't get otherwise. It allows the flavours to unfold more gradually, giving it a long, elegant finish. For me, that complexity complements the balance we look for in our dishes – especially those that are lighter or more delicate in nature. It's not just a topping; it becomes integral to the composition of the dish; we don't just scoop caviar on dishes, it's used as a crucial element.

You selected the N25 Kaluga Hybrid to be a part of your dish *COD ROE chicken, chervil, aged Kaluga Hybrid caviar*. **How would you describe this dish?**
First and foremost, it's a delicious dish with layers of complexity and silky textures which complement what the caviar is.

It also featured on *CORNISH TURBOT, artichoke, pear, mussel and roe sauce*. **How does the size and texture of the caviar elevate the visual elements of this dish?**
The Kaluga Hybrid caviar has a striking presence on the plate – the grains are generous, with a beautiful sheen and structure. That firmness gives a sense of intention in the

plating; it doesn't melt into the other elements but sits confidently among them.

What was your first impression of trying the N25 Kaluga Hybrid caviar?
I remember that first tasting quite vividly – there was this incredible clarity to it. The salinity was perfectly balanced, and what surprised me most was the length of flavour. It didn't overpower, but it lingered in a really refined way. The texture was pristine – you could tell immediately it had been aged with great care.

As a 3 Michelin star chef, what is the most important aspect when selecting your produce?
For me, it always starts with the land – what's grown around us, what's in season, and who's behind it. I need to understand the story of the produce – the care that's gone into it, the sustainability, and the respect for nature. That's why we work so closely with growers and suppliers who share those values. It's not about luxury, it's about responsibility – food that reflects where it comes from and who made it.

Through your process of selecting different produce, how is N25 different from other caviar brands?
There's a consistency with N25 that's incredibly rare. Each tin feels like a continuation of the last – same precision, same depth. That kind of reliability allows us to create with confidence. Beyond that, it's the relationship and transparency. They're open, they're passionate, and they're clearly driven by the same things we are – respect for the product, and a genuine pursuit of excellence. It's had a real impact, not just on the menu, but on the way guests experience the dish – they feel that care, even if they don't know the whole story behind it.

As N25 Caviar expands its footprint across the globe, its collaboration with Chef Mark Birchall is another benchmark moment – not just in brand building, but in storytelling through taste. It's a meeting of masters who believe that restraint is as powerful as ambition, and that the future of luxury lies in transparency, traceability, and timeless technique.

For guests at Moor Hall, it's an invitation to experience caviar at its most expressive - elegant, intentional, and unforgettable.

For more information about N25 Caviar, please visit us at **www.n25caviar.co.uk** or scan the QR code to directly WhatsApp us.

For more information about Moor Hall *** and chef **Mark Birchall** visit **www.moorhall.com**

Words Claire Bosi
Camera Al Higgins

"I always think if you can run a business in hospitality, you can pretty much run any business. Hospitality is completely people-based, with margins that are super slim and need to be always controlled. In fact, put Hospitality people into government – we'd streamline the f*ck out of that straight away!"

NIALL DAVIDSON

allta

Dublin

THERE'S ONE QUESTION I WANT TO ASK NIALL DAVIDSON AS WE SIT TO CHAT. AND IT IS A QUESTION I RARELY ASK CHEFS, BECAUSE IT FEELS TOO OBVIOUS. BUT, IN NIALL'S CASE, ASKING HIM WHICH KNIFE HE PREFERS TO WORK WITH IS PARTICULARLY VALID. FOR BEFORE NIALL DAVIDSON ENTERED THE WORLD OF PROFESSIONAL COOKING, HE TRAINED AS A BUTCHER.

Firstly, at his small family butchery in Northern Ireland, then taking his craft further under the guidance of some of London's most accomplished Master Butchers. There's nothing Niall doesn't know about meat. Whether that's sourcing, ageing, butchering or cooking.

"The best butchery knife?' he laughs, "not the answer I am sure you are expecting but something like a Victorinox. The inexpensive ones, the bendy cheap ones are the best butchery knives you can get. Right now, I maybe have like 10 different types of knives for 10 different types of everything. But when I go into kitchens and see chefs butchering a carcasse with these mega expensive Japanese knives. I'm like, just buy one for 12 quid from Victorinox.

"At home I still have my first knife. It was a red Victorinox butcher's knife. After all these years, yes it goes blunt easily, but it also sharpens easily. A big thing about great butchery is the quality of meat, understanding a carcasse and then how you handle it – it is not necessarily about having the most expensive knife"

"Our grill section here at Allta is a mix of cooking on the grill, but also butchery because we only deal in whole animals. I think it's very important for a young chef to be able to break down a whole animal and be able to cut it right, then cook it right. But to do that, they need to know exactly all the different muscles and all the way the grains run in those muscles. Because if you cook a beautiful piece of lamb leg and slice it with the grain, it might be okay, but it's still going to be tougher than if you slice it with an intuition about the muscles, knowing how they run, knowing how to butcher them. But first, get your supplier right.

"At Allta, the quality of our suppliers is non-negotiable, and we work closely with them. For example, we have an ex dairy beef programme with Woodtown Jersey Beef, a family farm

who have been milking jersey cows for over 75 years outside Kildalkey, County Meath. Together, we select 5- to 6-year-old jersey cows who have not gone back into calf, and they are retired from the dairy herd into our beef programme. They are slowly rehabilitated and fattened on native Irish grass, rolled barley and oats for 6 months. One they have reached the optimum fat levels; they are slaughtered and dry aged to mature. Then the carcasse makes its way to Allta and our work begins.

Allta. Located in Dublin's Docklands and making a lot of noise both over in Ireland and here in the UK. A step away from the River Liffey and found in an area surrounded by the big corporates. The energy of London's Fallow restaurant merges with the serious, yet innovative and fun approach to food often seen at Ynyshir.

Upon entering the building, there is an uber cool bar to the left, with a resident DJ and an incredibly unique cocktail list. On the right, past some sheer curtains, the dining room. A fully open kitchen sits at the back right of the dining space, dominated by a large Rhys Allen grill made bespoke for the installation. Ireland's finest is displayed everywhere, from the produce to the meat ageing cabinets to the stacks of hand-crafted ceramics from Fermoyle Pottery over in Ballinskelligs.

Niall Davidson is Chef Patron. Born in Scotland but raised on a farm in Derry, Northern Ireland, the early exposure to farming instilled a deep appreciation for quality produce and respect for those working in food production. When his time came to choose a career, Niall found that he did not want to follow his brothers down the university route.

"I did all my A-levels but didn't want to do any more studying. I grew up on the farm and had no real interest of ever having a job that involved sitting down. To be honest, I couldn't really think of anything worse than a 9-5 office job.

"I didn't really know what to do with my life at all. Our family had a little butcher shop, so I decided to go and work there while I figured out what I wanted to do. From age 16 to 21, I apprenticed as a butcher. But then I decided that I needed to move away from home and came to London.'

Continuing to work as a butcher, Niall joined O'Sheas - a company spanning several generations of butchers who specialise in supplying top end hospitality businesses.

"I loved it. I never laughed as much in my entire life as when I worked for O'Sheas. It was my most enjoyable job ever. I was young, I had no stress, I was working and the butchers all looked after me. Butchers also have their own language – a bit like London cabbies and Cockney slang! Picking that up was fun.

"I had two mentors that had been butchers their whole life. And it was fascinating because you learn so much from people like these two, they were so generous with their knowledge. They were both master butchers, so training others was everything to them.

"I had learned quite a bit of butchery in Ireland, but mainly about beef and lamb. But I found that butchery in London, in particular with pork, is just another level. It's like another art. I started to appreciate butchery as a craft, rather than a job. Seeing the differences between Irish and London butchery, as well as what customers would pay for premium quality meat, made me want to explore butchery in another country. I took myself to the north of Italy and staged in a butchery there. I couldn't speak a word of Italian, but I picked it up. It was fascinating just to learn and see different cultures and different ways.

"To be honest with you, if I hadn't had been a butcher, I wouldn't have become a chef"

So, how did the butcher become one of Ireland's hottest chefs?

"When I was working as a butcher, I dealt with so many chefs' he laughs, "I used to sell them meat, and they would drive me mad! After six months in the butchery in London, I was put on to the wholesale orders. At the time I didn't really want to do it because it was a bit more tedious. But I started meeting people, and there was one very influential person and a couple of very influential experiences that set me on this culinary path. The first person that

probably made me become a chef was a guy called Fred Smith. He is head of Beef at Flatiron now, before that Head of Food at Byron, but when I met him, he had the Admiral Codrington in South Kensington.

"One day, Fred called me up at the butchers. He had heard that we supplied good steaks. He then invited me down and cooked me the whole menu. It was fucking amazing to get that experience. Gastropubs in the UK, they're a whole new level compared to anywhere else in the world, in my opinion.

"Fred's kitchen was small; it was a gastropub – but he made everything. His attention to every detail of the food – from sourcing to making – mirrored that of any Michelin star restaurant. Nothing was bought in, not one thing.

"I enjoyed it so much that, on my days off from the butchers, I would go and just work in his kitchen. 5 days butchery followed by I ½ days kitchen. I did that for about a year and then I went to work for him full-time for six months after that. Fred was probably the person that was most influential in me becoming a chef."

The 'experiences" that Niall references he calls both "a bit kind of random."

"The first one was with Ruth Rogers. She phoned up the butcher shop asking if we supplied veal? When I said we did supply very high welfare veal, she ordered some veal loins. At this point I had no idea who Ruth Rogers was or what The River Cafe was really all about. I was completely oblivious.

"After a lunch service, Ruth calls me back up and says there was a problem with her chefs. They seemed unable to cut the veal properly. Would I go in and show the team how it's done? I was like, okay, no problem. I got on my bike and cycled down.

"The River Cafe kitchen is massive. There were about 20 chefs just randomly cutting T-bones of veal. Their techniques were all over the place. I found myself giving a demonstration to these chefs in one of the most influential kitchens in London. It was funny. One of those "did that just happen" moments.

"Another time was when another good friend of mine, Cary Docherty, was sous chef at this place called Royal Hospital Road. He had bought a whole highland cow carcasse but needed help to butcher it.

"Cary asked if I would go and give him a hand in this restaurant in Chelsea. Again, I had no idea what the restaurant Royal Hospital Road truly was. I went down and the whole crowd was there. Matt Abe was there, Clare Smyth was there, Ross, who's now in Dublin, was there, Cary was there.

"When you get that firsthand of experience of being in these kitchens and seeing chefs at that level, for me it was just like the next natural progression. I didn't even know this genre of cooking existed. I didn't go to Catering College. I enjoyed cooking but I didn't really know that this kind of excellence was a thing. At the time, in Ireland, you didn't really see restaurants like these."

HIs mind made up to step away from professional butchery into professional cooking, Niall started to research where would be the next best place for him to continue to learn the craft.

"I looked into kitchens I thought could be a good fit for me as a chef. At that point in time, St. John Bread and Wine was the place everyone was talking about. I actually went in and asked for a job. But there were none available. So, I offered to stage. After that, a place as breakfast chef came available. I was happy to take anything, just to get my foot in the door. If that meant cooking fucking bacon rolls for a year, I didn't mind."

His foot in the door of St John, and under the guidance of head chef, Lee Tiernan, Niall soon

allta
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merged into the main kitchen service and his culinary career began. Making his way through leading kitchens including St John, The Lockhart with Mississippi-born chef Brad McDonald then as senior sous chef at Nuno Mendes Chiltern Firehouse followed by the one Michelin star In de Wulf in Belgium, Niall's passion for learning never faltered. During those years, he made two decisions - head out on more stages and one day, open his own restaurant.

"When I finished at St John, I was supposed to go to New York. But the offer fell through as the restaurant I was going to suffered a load of damage in a hurricane and had to close. I decided to go to In de Wulf in Belgium instead.

"In de Wulf was probably one of the most influential restaurants I worked in, to be honest with you. A style of proper cooking mixed with finesse, foraging and fermentation. I ended up running the pass. But it was in the middle of absolutely fucking nowhere. I worked there for an eight-month season. Then I decided to do what every bloody chef wants to do – go to Noma.

"I went to Noma, but at the time I just didn't really enjoy it, to be honest with you. There were several reasons for that. I had just come from a restaurant that I fucking loved. I had a position of responsibility, running the pass and running service.

"I didn't know it at the time, but I was also burnt out. In Belgium I was working from 8am in the

morning to 1am in the morning. It was heavy and it was hard. I was completely burnt out, but my head hadn't told my body that.

"When I got to Copenhagen, I just didn't really enjoy it. Living there is so expensive, and I had no money. I was trying to navigate all these things while not feeling the excitement and anticipation I should have had.

"I spent a bit of time at Noma, and it was fine. It was good to see. It was also good for me to see that it wasn't for me. I always say that to a lot of chefs that come into my kitchens. Sometimes it's more important to see what you don't like as a chef than what you do like.

"Looking back, I would have liked to stayed at Noma for longer but my circumstances at the time were just wrong. I went back as a customer about six months ago. Had one of the best meals of my life. Insanely delicious food."

In 2019, after clocked up several serious roles and experiences, the time came for Niall to open his own restaurant in London's Shoreditch. Nuala, a restaurant and Irish bar (now Richard Corrigan's Daffodil Mulligan)

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specialised in British ingredients cooked over a wood fire. The response from critics was positive. But a year after opening, Niall knew something wasn't right.

"It was pretty shit time in my life, but a time I'd never change, to be honest with you. I was underqualified to open my own place; I didn't have the right partners with me. It just didn't work.

"But I think the more you are in this industry, the more you take it personally. There are probably many chefs or entrepreneurs out there that have had to close a business during their career. Even some of the best chefs have fucked up. Everybody's got a story like that to tell. But still, it hurts.

"We are chefs but we're entrepreneurs and we're risk takers too. Everything takes time and all good experiences are built on bad experiences. Nuala was a valuable lesson in my life. But even though I was in my late 20's, had a great CV and worked in some great places from big bistros to Michelin stars – I wasn't ready. I gave it my best shot at the time. Opening a restaurant, especially somewhere like London. It can be cutthroat and brutal."

Niall cut his losses. After a decade in the city, he returned to Ireland to gather his thoughts, rest and work out what next.

"I just wanted; no, I needed, an out of London. With a failed restaurant behind me and all the stress that brings I was burnt out again. I needed home.

'Coming back home was a defining time in my life. I took time. I travelled to Peru and worked at Astrid y Gastón which was fascinating. But I was considering going to live in Asia, I was offered a job in Australia. One in Hong Kong. It was a pivotal time in my career that I could have ended up anywhere in the world. Because that is what working as a chef brings you, right. Opportunities. A passport to work anywhere in the world. But there was an opportunity closer to home that I was not expecting."

The chance came to open something in Dublin, "so, I thought why not give Ireland a shot? I'd been traveling around the world, working here, working there. I've been in London. Maybe it was the right time for me to come and try something in Ireland"

The first Allta opened very humbly in December 2019 as a wine bar serving simple pasta dishes, "then sure - the pandemic started the following March - so we never really got much of a run at it. But in those months, we realised we had done something quite cool. We were building a following."

Pivoting to food boxes from a tiny kitchen – Allta became a delivery service, selling over 20,000 boxes during the Covid-19 Pandemic, "Then, when you could have outdoor dining, I thought it might be a mad idea to do an outdoor restaurant in the Summer House at Slane Castle, which was fun. Then we converted a car park in town, which was a disaster, but it was fun. If you're a customer, it was fun, but it was fucking horrid for us. But you know when you just need ways to trade, you kind of try and innovate. Some stuff works; some stuff doesn't. But it builds your brand"

Three years ago, the property which is now home to Allta became available. The building was just a shell, but it offered Niall everything he was looking for in terms of location and size.

"Our landlord's been very supportive and remains supportive as we're trying to grow the business. It is a completely new part of Dublin in terms of hospitality. We have zero footfall here; guests have to choose to come to us – it isn't like

a tourist will accidentally walk past us – it's a corporate area. So that comes with challenges earlier in the week and at lunchtime. We're super busy Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Saturday but we see where we have to build business.

"When this property came up, I just thought it was a nice space. We could have a nice kitchen, a nice restaurant, a nice bar, and do something a bit unique for the city. And in the past couple of years, we can see it's definitely an up-and-coming area. Dublin is great, but it can be a bit rough at the best times, like any city centre"

Allta very quickly gained acclaim for its inventive menu and commitment to showcasing Irish produce. Niall's dedication to sustainability is evident in his collaborations with local suppliers, such as Glenmar Shellfish in Union Hall and Cromane Bay Shellfish in Kerry. Food critics and restaurant awards soon began to arrive - with Allta being named number 2 in the Irish Best Restaurant awards. Checking out the Michelin guide website, it

also seems that Allta has piqued the interest of the inspectors as the restaurant appeared as a new entry last year.

Now Allta is fully settled into its home and having built up a clientele of both Dubliners and food tourists, Niall feels confident in his next move with his menus.

“We were running a la carte meus all last year and then brought the tasting menu in. The a la carte has been incredibly successful, but we've been selling more and more tasting menus. I think it's just the next natural progression for the restaurant and for the experience of the guest to go fully tasting – but with some course options. Controlling the experience that you can give a guest is so important for me, too.”

“Moving to tasting menu only. I think it will drive me to cook at a higher level. We have the right kitchen team. We have a nice team on the floor. Our tasting menu is a nice snapshot in time of who we are and who our suppliers are. It is a story, from start to finish.

“My food is super, uber seasonal. And I like to change the menu as much as possible. Especially with tasting menus, they can't just be the same. We need to get return customers and it's not like we got millions and millions of people at our door. It's nice to switch it up. So, we evolve. More tableside theatre. Because I think it's important for the guest experience to have some dishes finished at the table. Also, it's a bit of a wild moment if you're having steamed oysters table side. All these things add to the customer experience and if there’s one thing we like at Allta – it is talking to guests about our suppliers!”

ON FRONT OF HOUSE

“How do you impart even more into a customer's experience to make it so memorable? I think a lot of that comes down to front of house. And I don't think many front of house even realise how huge a part of the equation they are, and you could also argue that not many chefs appreciate that either. It’s not all about the food. Front of house make the restaurant; it is how they are made to feel that makes a diner return.

“In many cases, the skill set of people taking hospitality - especially front of house - as a career just isn't there yet. Compared to cooking. When you go to European countries, they have dedicated hospitality service schools – the profession is taken seriously, it’s respected, aspired to.

“Many other countries are big into training up front of house professionals, but in Ireland and England, the career is still just frowned upon. Even though the working conditions and pay far exceed ‘normal’ careers. If you are lucky to get some great FOH – pay them, train them and appreciate them Because the good ones are like gold dust.”

ON IRISH RESTAURANT GUIDES

“There's John and Sally McKenna in Ireland; they're like the gods of restaurants. They're not restaurant critics to a degree, but they kind of are. They have their McKenna guides and they've been going for over 30 years. They just get it. They get what you're trying to do as a chef. If it's fine dining, if it's a lobster shack, if it's a la carte, if it's a bar, they get it. They have this knack of writing in a beautiful way that explains your concept. To get number two in Ireland from them after a year and a half was a very big achievement. The lady that got number one is amazing. She's got a small fish restaurant in Cork called Goldie. She is obsessed with sustainability in fish. Couldn't go to a better person.

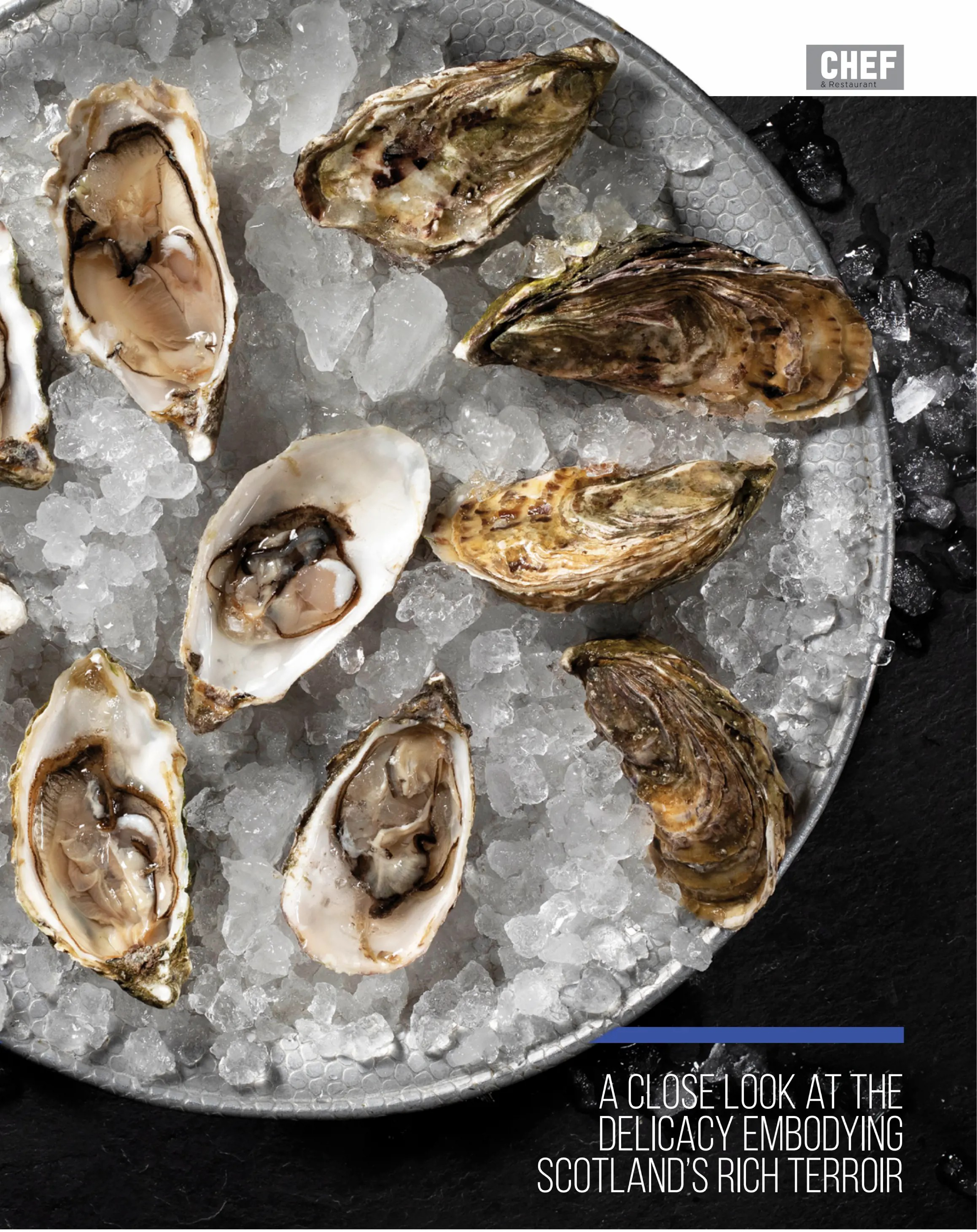
“The Irish Times has been very good to us. They're probably the biggest review you can get. If you get a good Irish Times review, it kind of overshadows everything else.

“There are a lot of other awards which I don't agree with, to be honest. There's one where you must pay for their inspector to come in. I'm like, fuck that. I just don't fall for that.

‘The Michelin guide is becoming very strong here in Ireland and that is amazing to see. Would I like a star for Allta? Goes without saying. One day that would be amazing. I hear rumours of a Michelin GB&I reveal coming to Ireland sometime in the future. I know that we can host a wicked party over here in Dublin, if that's the case!”

OYSTERS

THE UNSUNG HERO OF SCOTTISH SEAFOOD



A CLOSE LOOK AT THE DELICACY EMBODYING SCOTLAND'S RICH TERROIR

AROUND THE WORLD, OYSTERS ARE RECOGNISED AS A LUXURY, AND TAKE CENTRE STAGE IN MANY FINE-DINING RESTAURANTS. WITH CRISP AND NUTRIENT RICH SEAS, SCOTLAND IS A TRAILBLAZER IN HIGH-QUALITY AND AMPLE SEAFOOD PRODUCE, RENOWNED BY ESTEEMED CHEFS AND HOME COOKS ALIKE.

Many Scottish mollusc varieties, such as mussels, are internationally famous for their quality and flavour, and Scottish oysters are no different, bringing a unique taste and freshness found nowhere else.

Scotland has implemented several aquaculture initiatives and conservation measures to support the long-term health and resilience of oyster populations and their ecosystems, which has focussed on two varieties of oyster: Native and Pacific.

Making up just £50k in value to the annual Scottish seafood market, **Native Oysters** were once an integral part of Scotland's natural heritage, as billions formed dense beds over wide areas of the sea floor, including estuaries and sea lochs.

Prized for their delicate taste with subtle sweetness and creamy texture, this variety of oyster is part of Scotland's culinary heritage, and is best harvested in the cooler months, between September and April.

> According to Iain Mackay, Head of Aquaculture, their oysters are grown in a variety of ways, including baskets which allow them to be "rumbled" through the motion of the tide. This produces well-shaped shells with excellent meat content."

Introduced in the 1960s for aquaculture and diversification purposes, **Pacific Oysters** quickly gained popularity in Scotland due to their green credentials and distinct flavour profile, which is briny and mildly sweet. Nowadays, they make up £1.7 million of the annual Scottish seafood market.

Available year-round when sourced from controlled oyster farms and aquaculture facilities, the Pacific variety is a high-quality, accessible option for professional chefs.

Located in Inverary on the west coast, **Loch Fyne Oysters** hand rear their oysters with great care to ensure the highest quality. According to Iain Mackay, Head of Aquaculture, they are grown in a variety of ways, including baskets which allow them to be "rumbled" through the motion of the tide. This produces well-shaped shells with excellent meat content.

Purified and filtered in natural seawater, Iain provides assurance that these oysters never see any chemicals and are produced in an entirely natural process.

Iain said: "Once ready, our oysters are hand selected, packed in a protective environment, and despatched live to the UK, Middle East, and Far East, where they are served fine dining restaurants such as Origin City, London."

Scotland's irrefutable reputation for quality and care shines a spotlight on molluscs, drawing restaurants from far and wide to feature its rich seafood tapestry. Among them, oysters stand out as unsung heroes, meticulously nurtured from farm to fork, and captivating the palates of chefs across the country.

FLAVOUR PROFILE

COOL LOCHS AND FRESH OCEANS HOUSE SCOTLAND'S RICH ARRAY OF SEAFOOD, WITH EACH REGION IMPACTING THE FLAVOUR AND TEXTURE OF ITS OYSTERS IN ITS OWN UNIQUE WAY. HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES OF SOME OF SCOTLAND'S VARIOUS PRODUCERS AND THEIR FLAVOUR PROFILES:

Loch Fyne Oysters: Sweet, fresh, and slightly salty with a soft texture.
Cumbrae Oysters: A deep flavour of wood and nuts, a firm and meaty texture, with a copper hit to finish.
Caledonian Oysters: Big fruity flavours of apples, pears and avocado, with a plump and silky texture.

PAIRING RECOMMENDATION

OFTEN REFERRED TO AS THE 'JEWELS OF THE SEA', OYSTERS ARE KNOWN FOR TAKING ON A VAST ARRAY OF FLAVOUR COMBINATIONS. FROM SIMPLE CLASSICS SUCH AS LEMON JUICE AND TABASCO SAUCE, TO THE MORE ECCENTRIC PAIRINGS OF BLUE CHEESE AND PANCETTA, THEIR ABILITY TO ADAPT TO A DIVERSE PALATE RANGE REINFORCE THEIR STATUS AS A SEAFOOD PLATTER STAPLE.

1. **Served fresh with cucumber & jalapeño gratin** (Courtesy of Loch Fyne Oyster Bar Head Chef James Foster.)
2. **Grilled for a few minutes** and topped with crispy pancetta, dill, crème fraiche and a splash of Pernod.
3. **Served fresh with a Mignonette sauce**, comprising of chopped shallots, black pepper, and red wine vinegar.

IMAGE CREDIT: LOCH FYNE OYSTERS

SEAFOOD FROM SCOTLAND

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www.seafoodfromscotland.org

Words Cara Houchen
Camera Millie Rose Photography

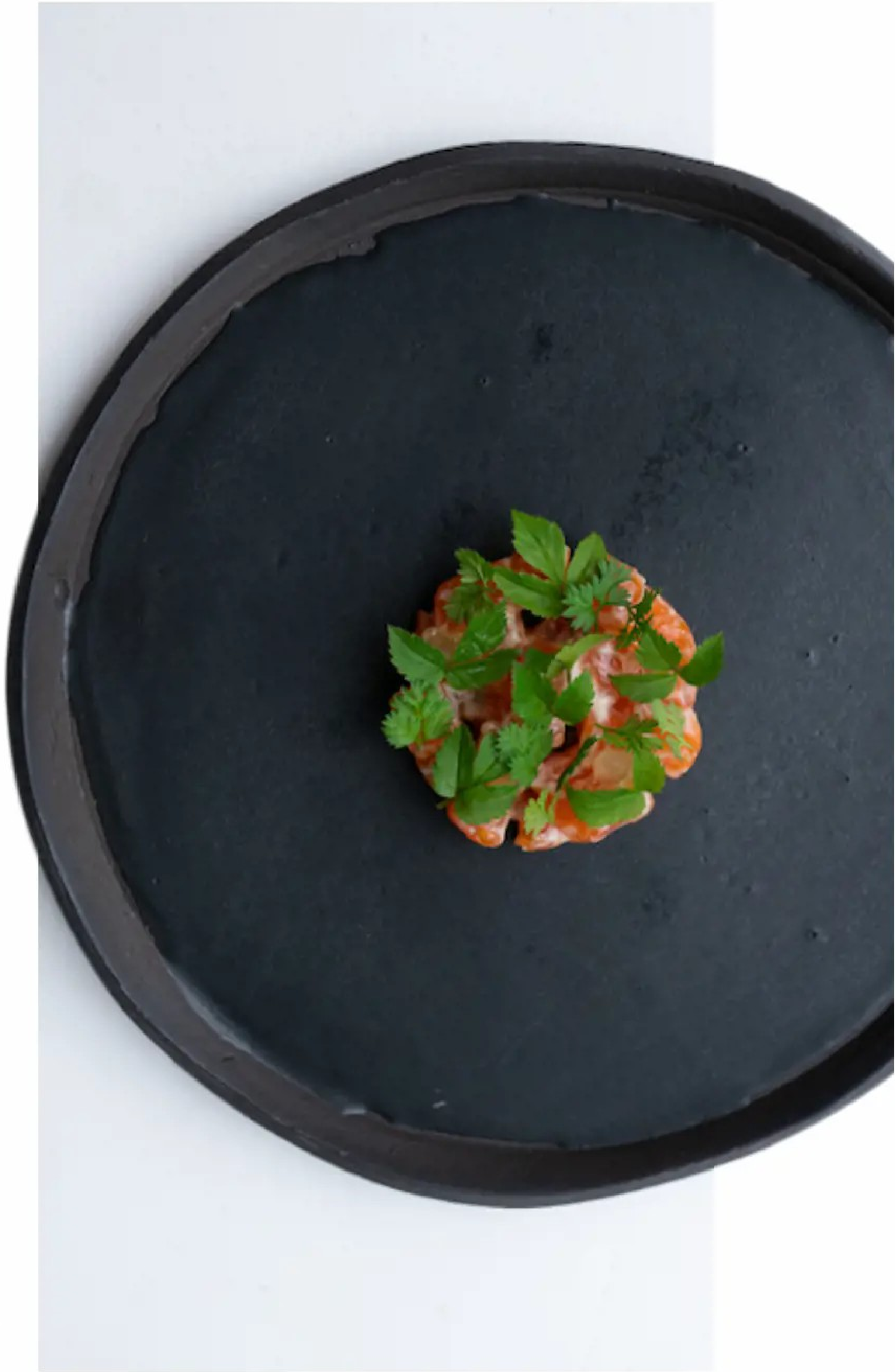
“IT'S A **FULL CIRCLE** MOMENT AND A HUGE ACHIEVEMENT TO HAVE SUCH AN AMAZING RESTAURANT AND BUILDING BEHIND ME AND LAURISSA. WE CAN'T WAIT TO GET STARTED AND SEE WHERE WE CAN TAKE IT”

TOM HEYWOOD

TOM AND LAURISSA HEYWOOD, THE DYNAMIC HUSBAND AND WIFE DUO BEHIND THE ACCLAIMED PIGNUT RESTAURANT IN HELMSLEY, ARE PREPARING TO WRITE THE NEXT CHAPTER IN THEIR REMARKABLE JOURNEY.

In a move that marks both a professional milestone and a deeply personal dream, the couple have acquired the renowned Hare at Scawton – a 12th-century inn nestled in the heart of the North York Moors – from Paul and Liz Jackson.

The transition, set to take place in July 2025, will see Pignut relocate to the historic site, which will be reimagined as Pignut & The Hare. The venue will retain its charm while offering new possibilities for Tom and Laurissa, including on-site accommodation and the chance to become more self-sufficient by growing produce on the surrounding land.



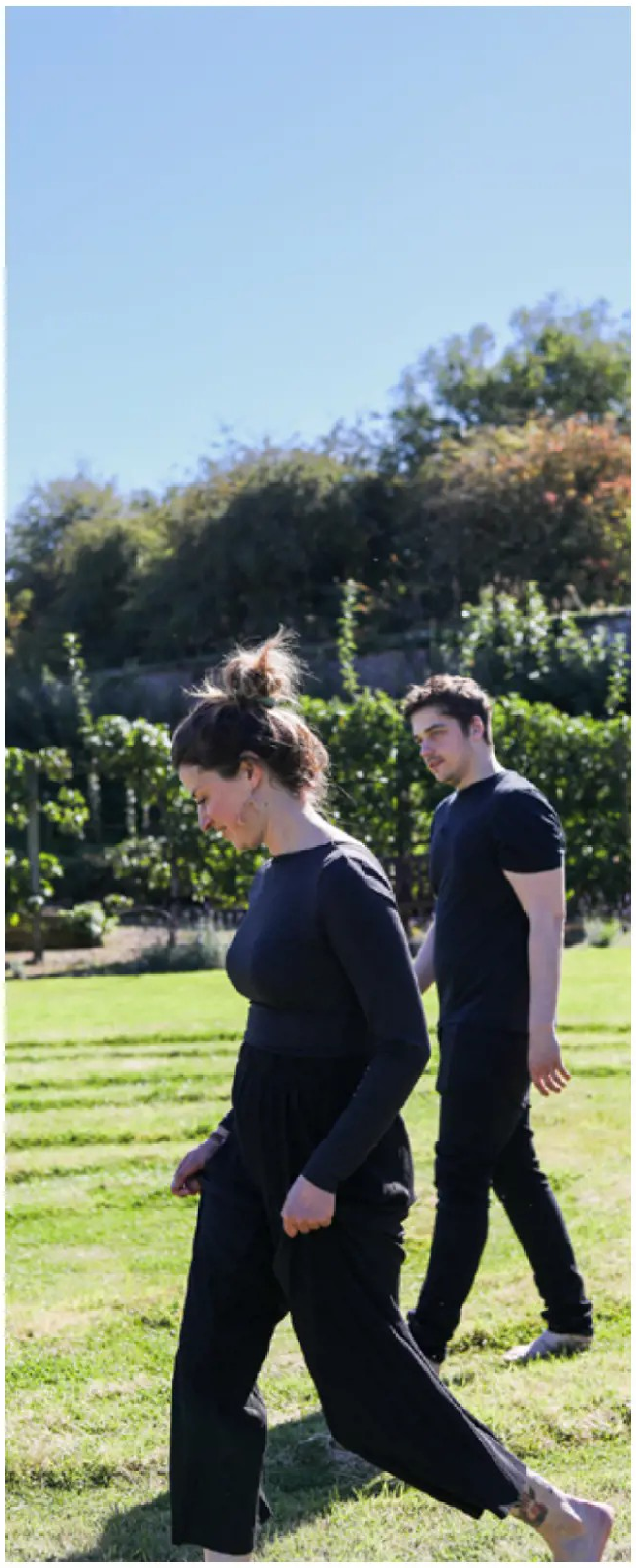
This move is the culmination of a long-held ambition for Tom, who once phoned The Hare looking for a job early in his culinary career.

Tom grew up nearby in Church Fenton, and has spent many years working in notable kitchens, developing a passion for sustainability. The 31-year-old started his career locally at Aldwark Manor before setting his sights on Michelin-starred kitchens, spending time at Midsummer House and The Cottage in the Wood. Inspired by Dan Barber's Blue Hill, he became interested in sustainable practises within restaurants, an ethos he implemented as part of his first head chef position at The Rattle Owl in York. During his time there he was awarded 2 Rosettes and in 2020, won restaurant of the Year in the White Rose Awards plus they were recommended in the Michelin Guide.

Tom said: "About 8 or 9 years ago I remember ringing The Hare asking for a job as I loved everything about the restaurant, and after meeting Paul and Liz I really wanted to work there but they said they had no jobs available, and I had to find somewhere else.

"Now I have been given the opportunity to own The Hare. It's a full circle moment and a huge achievement to have such an amazing restaurant and building behind me and Laurissa. We can't wait to get started and see where we can take it."

Laurissa added: "I am so excited to get started with The Hare, Liz and Paul have been so helpful from the moment they found out we were opening Pignut in Helmsley. Now they have given us this opportunity to own The Hare, it's a really special place and we can't wait to see where it takes us. It really is a dream come true."



Pignut opened in June 2023 and quickly established itself as one of North Yorkshire's most exciting fine dining destinations. Known for its fiercely sustainable approach, the restaurant has earned numerous accolades, including three AA Rosettes, a recommendation in the Michelin Guide, and recognition as a carbon-neutral business. It's not just the dishes, Pignut uses sustainable wine solutions, which pick up empty glass bottles and refill them. They use Refood for their food waste which recycle the waste into bioenergy, and they recycle all plastic and cardboard.

Tom's innovative cooking and Laurissa's warm hospitality have put Pignut on the map, with menus that celebrate hyper-local, foraged ingredients, and a zero-waste philosophy.

At the heart of the restaurant is a commitment to community and the environment. Ingredients are sourced from nearby producers such as Otterburn Farm and Castle Howard, while herbs, vegetables and flowers are picked by hand at Helmsley Walled Garden – a project run by volunteers to promote mental health through gardening. Even the dried flowers on the tables are from Tom and Laurissa's own garden.

This dedication to sustainability earned Pignut carbon-neutral status in 2024, and Laurissa's leadership was recognised with a prestigious Acorn Award, celebrating her as one of the UK hospitality industry's rising stars under 30.

Now, the pair are ready to bring their values, creativity and passion to their new home at

ROCKGARDEN Ceramics

Scawton. The Hare, which Paul and Liz Jackson lovingly restored over more than a decade, has long been a destination for food lovers. With its rustic charm, contemporary interiors, and four beautiful guest rooms, it was named AA Restaurant with Rooms of the Year for England in 2021.

Paul and Liz said: "While we are still on a high, we have decided to hand over the reins to a younger, hungry, dynamic couple.

"We have loved every minute of our time here. We have met some great people, many of which we have served countless times.

"We've built our business to its enviable position from nothing. There have been ups and downs, blood, sweat and tears, and we are immensely proud of our achievements.

"It wasn't necessarily a planned time to move on, but having met Tom and Laurissa a few years ago we instantly thought they would be a great successor to us.

"After their success at Pignut over the past couple of years we thought the time was right. We've been to their restaurant and enjoyed their hospitality many times, and we're 100% sure we have made the right decision in supporting two future giants of the industry to get to where they want to be and at the same time ensure The Hare goes from strength to strength."

For Tom and Laurissa, the move represents more than just a change in location. It's a chance to grow – literally and figuratively. With access to more land, they plan to increase their own food production, offering guests an even closer connection to nature and the source of their meals.

As they prepare to say farewell to Bridge Street in Helmsley and hello to Scawton, the team behind Pignut remain grounded in the same values that made them a success: authenticity, sustainability, and a deep love of food and hospitality.

PARMIGIANO REGGIANO PDO FUELS THE FUTURE OF FINE DINING AS A SPONSOR OF WESTMINSTER KINGSWAY COLLEGE

IN THE BUSTLING HEART OF LONDON'S VICTORIA, A UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP IS BRINGING CENTURIES-OLD CRAFTSMANSHIP INTO ONE OF THE UK'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS CULINARY INSTITUTIONS. PARMIGIANO REGGIANO PDO, THE LEGENDARY CHEESE WITH PROTECTED DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN STATUS, IS A PROUD SPONSOR OF WESTMINSTER KINGSWAY COLLEGE.

It's a collaboration that perfectly blends authenticity, education and the shared passion for excellence in food.

Known for training some of Britain's most lauded chefs, Westminster Kingsway College is no ordinary catering school. From Michelin-starred restaurants to avant-garde kitchens across the UK and beyond, its alumni are shaping the future of fine dining. And with support from partners like Parmigiano Reggiano PDO, today's students are being equipped not only with exceptional training but with a deep appreciation for the ingredients and traditions that define world-class cuisine.

Parmigiano Reggiano PDO is more than a cheese, it's a symbol of quality, heritage and craftsmanship. Produced exclusively in specific provinces of Italy including Parma, Reggio Emilia, Modena, Bologna to the left of the river Reno and Mantova to the right of the river Po, using time-honoured methods dating back nearly a thousand years, this cheese is a staple in professional kitchens around the globe. Its unmistakable nutty, salty, umami-rich flavour is the result of strict production standards, long maturation periods and the passion of its producers.

PARMIGIANO
REGGIANO

PARMIGIANO REGGIANO
The only Parmesan.
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Fire exit
Keep clear

Left to right Paul Jervis from WKC, Gennaro Contaldo and Jose Souto from WKC.

At Westminster Kingsway College, students have the privilege of working directly with authentic Parmigiano Reggiano PDO, provided through the partnership. From delicate risottos to velvety sauces, this exceptional ingredient has become an integral part of the student experience.

Chef lecturers integrate Parmigiano Reggiano PDO into lessons on both traditional cuisine and modern fusion cooking, demonstrating how such a versatile ingredient can elevate a wide range of dishes. Students are encouraged to explore its full potential, learning to recognise the differences in flavour depending on the cheese's maturation, texture and use.

This May, Westminster Kingsway College is opening its doors to sponsors, supporters and industry partners for its annual Culinary Arts & Hospitality Partners' Luncheon. The exclusive event is a tribute to the organisations and individuals who help shape the student's journeys.

Parmigiano Reggiano PDO, as a key sponsor, will be among the honoured guests. The lunch, entirely prepared and served by the students, is a testament to the college's hands-on approach to education. The event not only celebrates the contributions of partners but gives students the opportunity to interact with leading voices in the culinary world. It's a moment of pride, professionalism and gratitude.

This year's menu is expected to feature both traditional and contemporary dishes that reflect the students' evolving skills. The collaboration between Parmigiano Reggiano PDO and Westminster Kingsway College is about creating opportunities and giving students access to exceptional products that enhance their learning experience. The guests will get to see this first-hand during this year's lunch.

As the UK's hospitality industry continues to advance, the need for skilled, passionate chefs has never been greater. With the support of its sponsors, Westminster Kingsway College continues to raise the bar, preparing its students not just to meet industry standards, but to redefine them.

Whether it's in a Michelin-starred dining room, a modern bistro, or an experimental test kitchen, graduates of Westminster Kingsway College carry with them the lessons learned from working with ingredients like Parmigiano Reggiano PDO. It's a foundation of flavour, skill and inspiration, one that's helping to shape the future of food, one plate at a time.

In June 2024, the Consorzio del Formaggio Parmigiano Reggiano entered the second year of its three-year integrated campaign in the UK. The €3.9m campaign is co-funded by the European Union and activity is set to continue the promotion of European products with a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) quality certification, of which Parmigiano Reggiano PDO is recognised for.

Capital City College
“Cooking is a lifelong journey of learning and discovery”
Auguste Escoffier
“It all begins at WestKing”

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE SCHOOL OF HOSPITALITY - PART OF CAPITAL CITY COLLEGE

Valimex
CONNECTING CHEFS WITH
THE FINEST UK
PRODUCE

Supporting sustainable farming and the farmers behind it

AS THE UK'S GROWING SEASON GETS UNDERWAY, PRODUCE GROWERS ARE FACING A SPRING MARKED BY BOTH OPPORTUNITY AND UNCERTAINTY. THE START OF 2025 HAS BEEN THE DRIEST IN NEARLY 40 YEARS, WITH JUST 20.5CM OF RAINFALL RECORDED DURING THE FIRST QUARTER—RAISING RED FLAGS FOR EARLY CROPS AND SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASING WILDFIRE RISK IN SOME REGIONS (BLOOMBERG, 2025).

Ever deepening their partnerships, the team from Valimex have been out and about on the road visiting their partner growers and producers to find out what's full in season, what's coming up and what chefs should be on the lookout for over the next few weeks.

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Nutborne Tomatoes

NUTBOURNE
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Tom Richards, Head of Business Development at Valimex headed down to Nutborne Nursery.

Nutbourne tomatoes are a celebrated product of Nutbourne Nursery, nestled in the heart of West Sussex, UK. Grown in carefully controlled glasshouse environments, these tomatoes have earned a reputation among leading chefs for their exceptional taste, vibrant colours, and consistent quality. The family-run nursery has been cultivating tomatoes for decades, combining traditional horticultural practices with sustainable, low impact growing methods.

Nutbourne tomatoes display a remarkable flavour, a result of slow ripening on the vine and expert selection of heirloom and speciality varieties. These include classics like the sweet, deep-red cherry tomato as well as more unusual types such as golden yellows, green zebras, and the richly marbled tiger tomatoes. Each variety offers a unique balance of acidity, sweetness, and texture.

Nutbourne Nursery is committed to sustainable agriculture. They avoid the use of harmful pesticides and focus on integrated pest management and natural pollination, often using bumblebees. Water usage is tightly managed, and the tomatoes are grown in coconut coir, a renewable substrate that supports healthy root systems and reduces environmental impact.

Growing Field 28

Dan Whitmore paid a visit to Growing Field 28 to catch up and saw baby leeks, red and white currants, Mesclun and Oregano ready or near for harvest.

Mesclun leaf (often referred to simply as "mesclun") is a mix of young, tender salad greens that typically includes a variety of lettuces and leafy vegetables. The word mesclun comes from the Provençal word mesclumo, meaning "mixture," and it originated in the Provence region of France. Traditional mesclun mixes might include:

- Arugula (rocket) – peppery and bold
- Mâche (lamb's lettuce) – soft and nutty
- Frisée – curly and slightly bitter
- Oak leaf lettuce – mild and buttery
- Radicchio – crunchy and slightly bitter
- Baby spinach – tender and mildly sweet
- Chervil – delicate, with a hint of anise

Mesclun can vary quite a bit depending on the grower or the season. Some modern versions might include mustard greens, baby kale, red chard, mizuna, or beet leaves, giving the mix a range of colours, textures, and flavours—from sweet and mellow to spicy and earthy.

Mesclun leaves are typically harvested very young, often when the plants are just a few inches tall, which gives them their tender texture and subtle flavour. They're best used raw, where their freshness can shine, though they can also be gently wilted into warm dishes.

Spilmans Asparagus

For over a decade, the Spilman family have been lovingly cultivating three varieties of asparagus – Gijnlim, Portlim and Avalim – across ten sandy soil acres in Helperby, North Yorkshire. Their asparagus is carefully planted in May, delivering a crop two years later. The enterprise is led by Richard and Sally Spilman, along with their sons Tom and Joss

Care and attention underpin everything the Spilman family do to ensure Valimex deliver the finest asparagus to their chefs around the UK. When ready, each asparagus stalk is cut by hand and transported to the packing house, which sits on the farm, just under a mile away. There the asparagus is checked for quality, bundled and ready for Valimex to collect the same day.

The asparagus season is now in full swing and the Spilman family have been taking to social media to celebrate, showcasing delicious dishes and, of course, enjoying National Asparagus Day!

LMANS
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Britt Willougby Dyer
Davie Loftus

> "WE WON'T JUST BE LOOKING TO PROVIDE PRODUCE FOR THE TABLE. WE'LL ALSO BE LOOKING TO SUPPLY OTHER RESTAURANTS IN OUR GROUP, SO THAT WE HAVE A YEAR-ROUND SUPPLY."
>
> **ANDY SHERIDAN**

IT'S ONE OF THE UK'S MOST BEAUTIFUL RESTAURANT SITES. THE FORMER PENSONS RESTAURANT, AT THE NETHERWOOD ESTATE, DEEP IN THE HEART OF RURAL MIDDLE ENGLAND, IS A DREAM.

Set in a quiet, bucolic corner of Herefordshire, one of England's quietest, prettiest, and least populous counties, it is surrounded by rolling countryside.

The site owner, Peta Darnley, invested time, considerable resources, and more than a little heart and soul as she created a beautiful restaurant with rooms. She also created a remarkable market garden, not a million miles away from the creations of such big-hitting restaurants as Le Manoir and Moor Hall, albeit on a smaller scale, with gardeners curating high quality produce for the kitchen.

Pensons won and retained a Michelin star, firstly under Lee Westcott, then under Chris Simpson, who also secured a Michelin Green Star, before Ivan Tisdall-Downes ran the site as Native. Pensons is about to be reborn. The Michelin-ranked Andy Sheridan, chef director of the Open Restaurant Group, will be behind the stove when it launches at the end of May. Sheridan secured the deal with his business partners, husband and wife team, Sam and Emma Morgan, who have a burgeoning portfolio of seven restaurants.

Pensons is being given a rebrand – it will now be known as Sow, in deference to the seeds that are sown on site, which underpin its seasonal, field to plate ethos.

Sheridan is thrilled. "It's highly unusual that a site of this calibre becomes available and it's one that literally fits in with what we're all about. It's at a high level – people love the food that Pensons was renowned for, and we'll be looking to maintain or improve upon the standards that were set.

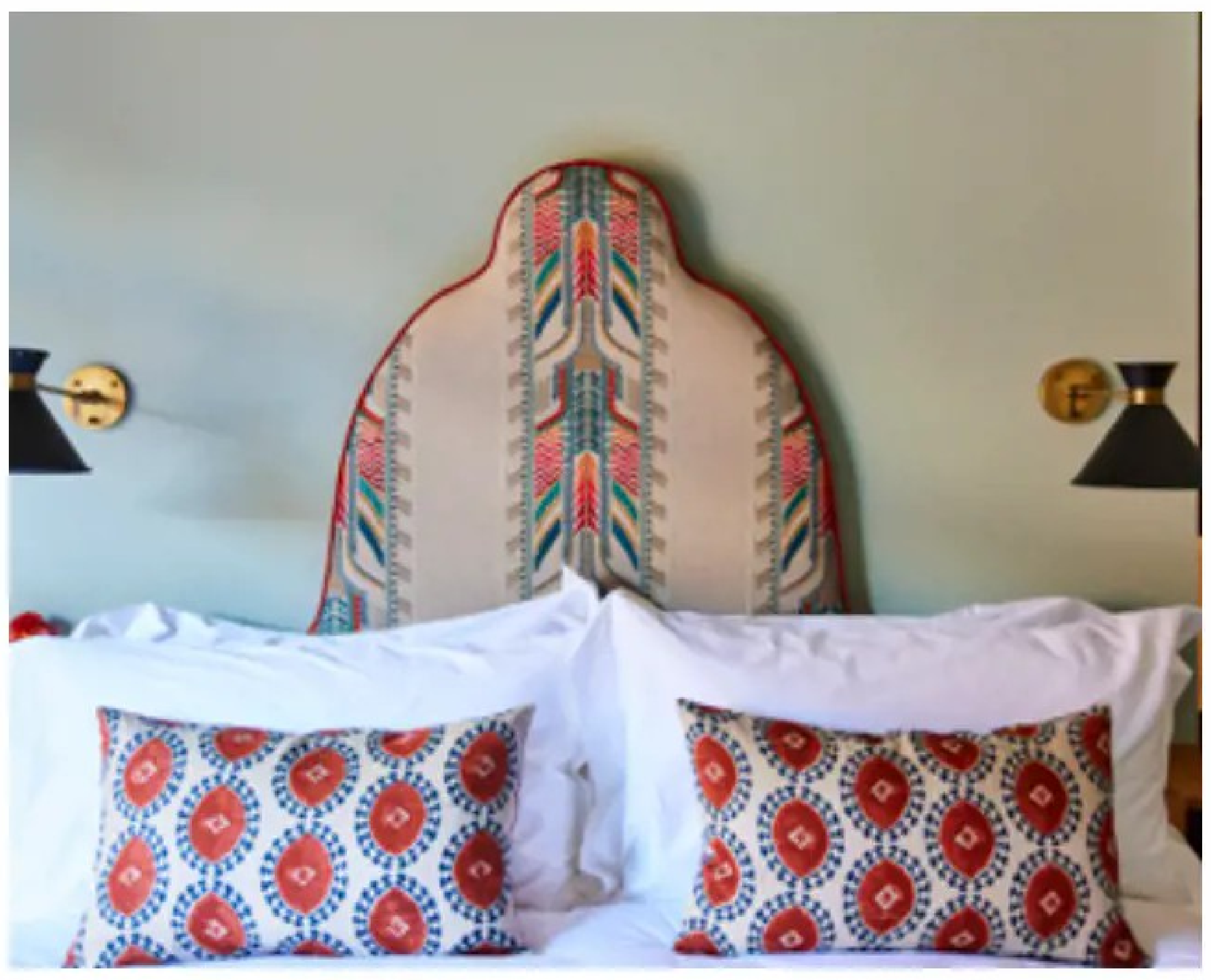
"But we're also really, really excited about the garden. We won't just be looking to provide produce for the table. We'll also be looking to supply other restaurants in our group, so that we have a year-round supply."

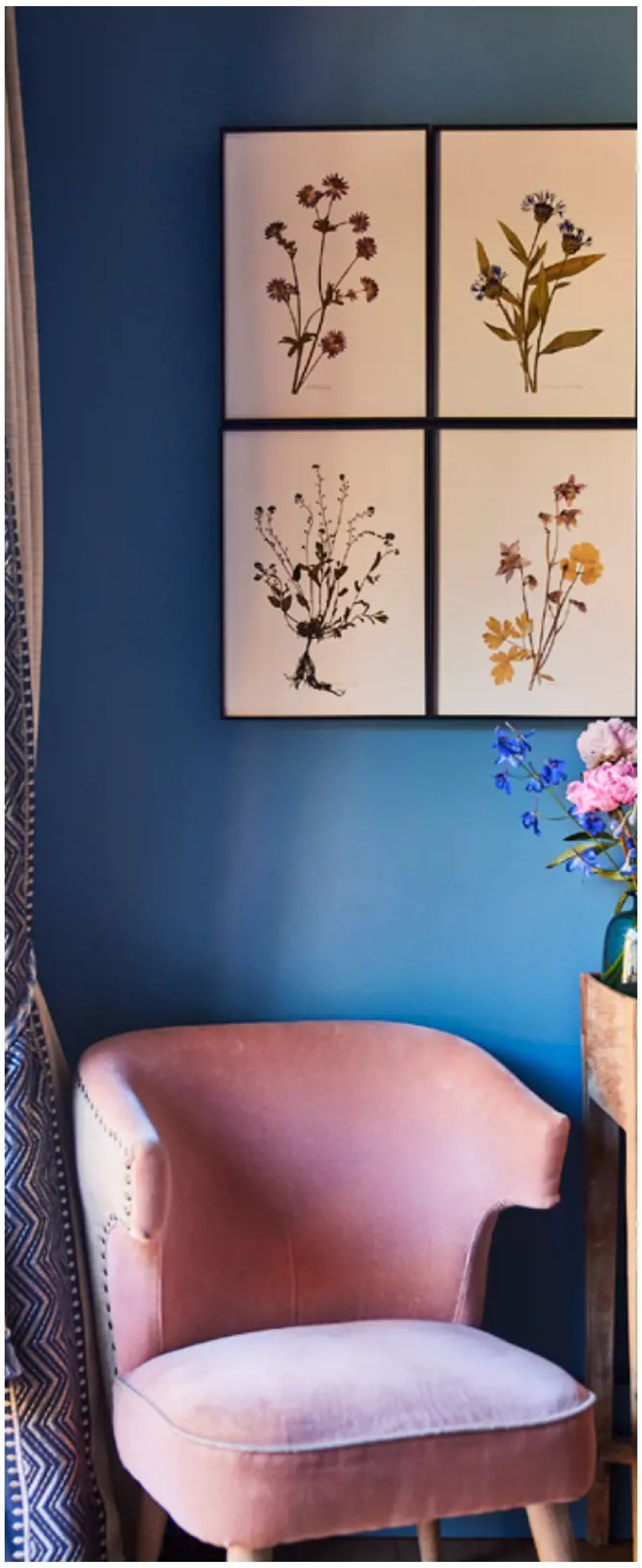
To that end, Sheridan has been on a whirlwind trip of Europe, visiting a number of starry restaurants, to bolster his knowledge of pickling and preserving, so that produce doesn't go to waste. There would, after all, be little point in having a productive market garden that created a glut, only for much of it to go to waste.

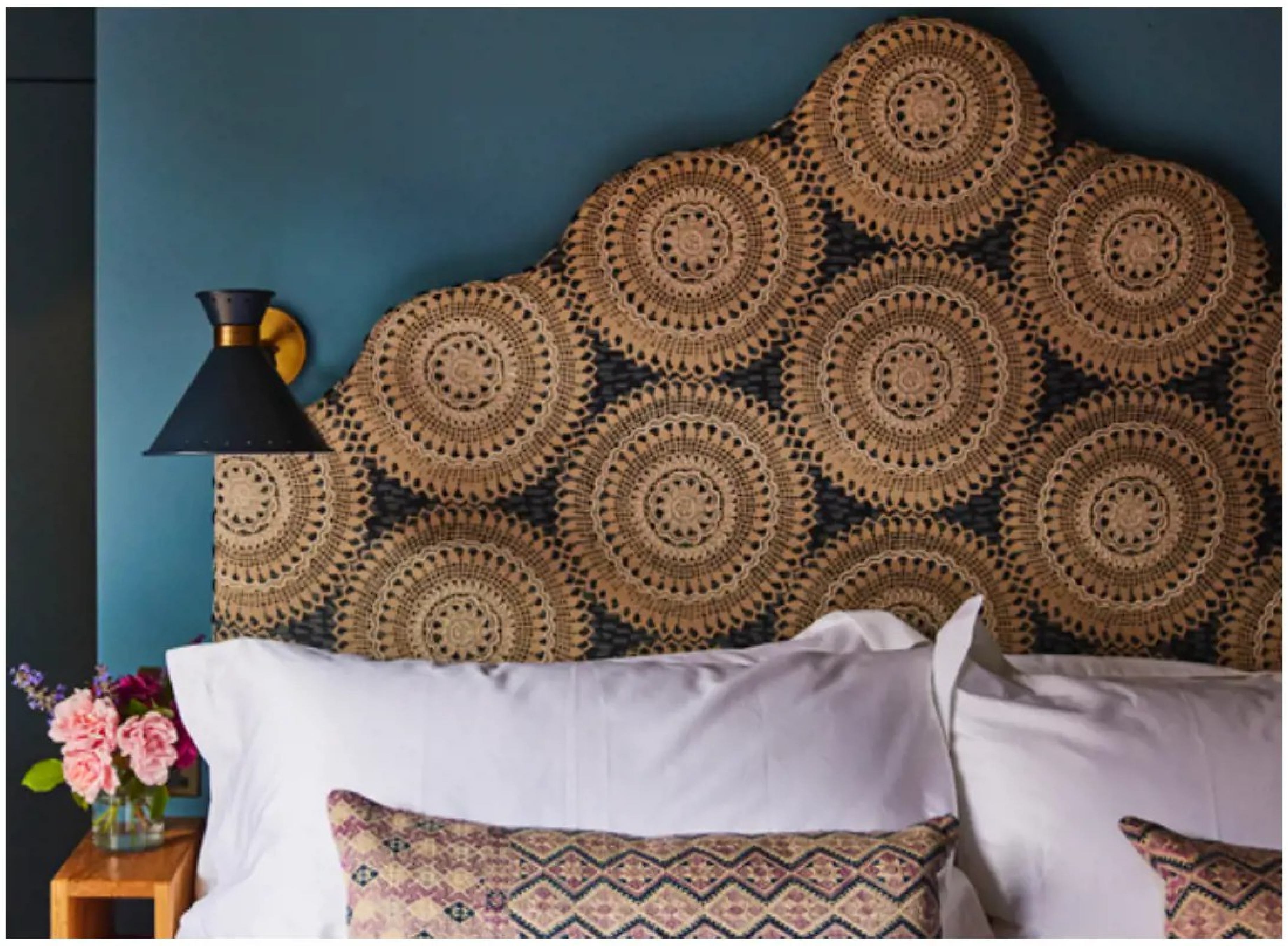
"We're really set on sustainability and on giving diners the freshest, truest flavours. We're very happy that we've been able to work with Peta, the site owner, to carry forward and build upon the work that she's done."

Sam Morgan, ORG's founder and CEO, has big plans for the site. He's keen to develop a long-term relationship with Darnley to develop other parts of the site. There is space to create elegant, high-end rooms, for those who wish to escape the city and head to a part of the country where's there's little else to do but relax.

Morgan says: "I think we're fortunate, firstly, not only to become operators for the site, but also to find such a good landlord. Peta is someone that we're looking forward to working with over a period of years, as we try to build on the legacy that she's created. She's a remarkable lady and we've really enjoyed getting to know her.







"We're learning about how the site works, what potential there is, and what we can do to move things forward. Our ideas are very strongly aligned and this could well become a career-defining opportunity. We're very committed to continuing to grow and adding a site of this calibre is something that we've been working towards for some years."

The acquisition will come as no surprise to those who have monitored the steady growth of ORG, one of the UK's most enterprising small, independent restaurant groups. It originated around 10 years ago at Craft, in Birmingham, a large, unwieldy, and challenging site, which helped the business to grow up fast. Sheridan came on board at that time, helping to steer the group to calm waters and spearheading the popular city centre restaurant, 8.

Post-Covid, the group has quickly grown, opening a popular bistro, Black & Green, in Birmingham's suburbs, relocating 8 to Sheridan's native

Liverpool, creating the popular high-end bistro, Dishes, in Prestatyn, while also making a success of OXA, in Birkenhead. It has a second, casual eating venue near to Black & Green, Corfton Pizza, as well as a large and thriving pub, The Bracebridge, in the centre of one of Birmingham's most-beloved green spaces, Sutton Park.

It's geographical spread – restaurants in and around Birmingham and the Midlands, and those in and around Liverpool and the North West, is no coincidence. Sheridan hails from Liverpool, while Sam and Emma Morgan are based in the suburbs of Birmingham, near to two of their restaurants.

That makes the group operate more easily. Chefs who develop their skills have opportunities to take on more responsibilities at other sites, while Morgan can move his team from site to site, where appropriate and where that's desirable.

Sow will be led by Sheridan, who is looking forward to getting behind the stove and who will cook there three days per week, splitting his time between there and 8. "We have a great team now and there are seriously good cooks in place. We're in a position where others can step up to the plate and take their chance to shine. I need to take things on at Sow, where we can be at our absolute best.

"The site has great heritage and there are remarkable connections with the 1,200-acre Netherwood Estate. We'll be looking to build on the relationships with local craftsmen and women, and with local producers, so that we can emulate the work of Pensons, through Sow."

Pensons was much loved locally. It opened in January 2019 and was awarded a Michelin Star later that year. In 2022, it also won a Michelin Green Star for sustainability but shut its doors at the end of the following year. Native, a zero-waste restaurant, moved into the building in April 2024 but closed suddenly in March 2025.

Morgan says the group will move forward.

"We're a robust, resilient group and there's a lot of ambition. The work that Peta initiated in terms of sustainability and being at the heart of Netherwood is something that we're excited by.

"But we're also excited at the opportunities that we'll be creating for members of the ORG team. There aren't many small groups, like ours, where chefs can move around from restaurant to restaurant, take responsibility, and grow.

"Hospitality has been struggling for some time, with rising fuel prices, the impacts of Brexit, the lack of Government support, and with the cost of living crisis. There have been real pressure points, which have squeezed consumers, and the NI increase has had a huge impact.

"We've been able to manoeuvre our way through some of those challenges and we're very optimistic about the future. We have a great team of chefs, a strong core team, and Sow gives us the opportunity to raise the game. We can kick on, set ourselves new challenges, and aspire to higher standards.

"We're very motivated to retain the practices that helped Ivan secure the Green Michelin star – sustainable food will be a key part of what we do."

At a time of gloom and doom in hospitality, Sow intends to provide an alternative. As diners look to escape the city and find experiential restaurants, it has all the right credentials. And as we head into summer, the dreams of Sheridan, Morgan, et al, are sure to bloom. C

“Rather than compromise what Fhior stands for, we’ve chosen to close on our own terms, with intention, and with the same care and integrity that defined every service”

Scott Smith

PLEASE GIVE MY
CONDIMENTS
TO THE CHEF

FHIOR, EDINBURGH’S MULTI-AWARD WINNING RESTAURANT FROM CHEF PATRON SCOTT SMITH WILL RUN ITS CLOSING DINNER SERVICE ON 1 JUNE 2025 AND WILL SHUT ITS DOORS FOR THE LAST TIME AFTER THE FINAL GUEST LEAVES.

Scott, who has run the restaurant since 2018 will be launching a new culinary project, Blank Plate Creative providing hospitality businesses with bespoke catering solutions.

The restaurant, which has been co-owned by Scott and his wife Laura, has won numerous awards and is listed in the Good Food and Michelin Guides. Its ethos lay in showcasing Scottish produce and elevating the flavours that the country has to offer often bringing under utilised ingredients to the forefront - most famously its beremeal bread, which legendary critic AA Gill called 'sublime', whilst Marina O'Loughlin said of Scott; "a new Scottish star is born".

Just a year after opening, Fhior won Restaurant of The Year at the Edinburgh Restaurant Awards and, later that year, Scott was crowned Best Scottish Chef at the Scotsman Food and Drink Awards. Scott has also previously won an Acorn Award, a coveted award given annually for 30 stars in hospitality under the age of 30. Fhior was also noted in the Estrella's National Restaurant Awards upon opening and was crowned Scottish Restaurant of the Year in the Scotsman Scran Awards just last year.

FHIOR
FHIOR
36
Blue Morpho

Scott and Laura have said:

"After nearly seven incredible years, we've made the deeply difficult decision to bring our restaurant, Fhior to a close.

"This has not been an easy decision. Fhior has meant the world to us—not just as a restaurant, but as a place where we've met lifelong friends, shared unforgettable moments, and worked with some of the most passionate, generous people we could have ever hoped to cross paths with. From our dedicated team past and present, to our wonderful regulars, guests, and suppliers—you've helped make Fhior a place of purpose and genuine connection. We are so incredibly grateful.

"Ultimately, this decision comes down to several personal and practical factors, including the arrival of our second child and a desire to spend more time with our growing family. While the restaurant has achieved so much, the cost of doing things the right way in a very difficult hospitality climate has taken its toll. Rather than compromise what Fhior stands for, we've chosen to close on our own terms, with intention, and with the same care and integrity that defined every service. Our team has been part of this process and we've been able to help them all find new jobs.

"We want to end well—there's still time to join us over the coming weeks, and we'll be doing everything we can to ensure this final chapter is one we can all be proud of.

"To those holding gift vouchers, we understand this may be short notice, and we are already looking at ways to honour those who cannot use them in time—we will be in touch. If you have a booking, please bear with us while we get back to everyone.

"While this is the end of Fhior as a restaurant, this is not the end of the journey. In the months ahead, we'll be focusing on family, rest, and some exciting new projects, including the launch of Blank Plate Creative, a space for collaboration, creativity, and supporting others in building meaningful food businesses, and you never know where Fhior may pop up again.

"Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, for being part of Fhior's story. We've loved every moment, and we'll carry the spirit of what we built here into everything that comes next."

“It’s the kind of place I’ve always wanted to create — one that brings together the food memories that shaped me. From childhood days in Jamaica to watching the women in my family work their magic in the kitchen”

Dom Taylor

CHEF DOM TAYLOR INTRODUCES MARVEE’S FOOD SHOP, A NEW RESTAURANT COMING TO LADBROKE GROVE THIS MAY, A PLAYFUL REIMAGINING OF THE CARIBBEAN TAKEAWAY.

chef. DOM TAYLOR

Named after Dom’s mother Marveline (affectionately known as Marvee), Marvee’s Food Shop will draw on the sounds, smells and stories of Dom’s childhood and heritage, with a nod to the characterful, often chaotic Caribbean food shops scattered across London. Marvee’s Food Shop follows the success of Dom Taylor’s first solo venture The Good Front Room, the ten month residency which brought elevated Caribbean dining to the Langham Hotel.

A laid-back deviation from Dom’s days at the Langham, Marvee’s Food Shop - set to open on Friday, May 9th - will be housed within music and events space UNDR, close

to Portobello Road. Seating 60 covers, across both its indoor dining space and outdoor terrace, Marvee's Food Shop will bring a creative twist to traditional dishes nostalgic to Dom, be it comforting recipes cooked on repeat by the women in his family or dishes remembered fondly from childhood trips to Jamaica.

From the fiery kick of scotch bonnet to the deep sweetness of over-ripe plantain, the bold flavours of Marvee's inventive menu will be rooted in the memory of home, food and family, reimagined with a chef's lens. Two Caribbean classics, the Bammy (a traditional cassava bread) and the Jamaican Festival (a deep-fried sweet bread) will take pride of place on the Marvee's Food Shop menu, but with a Dom Taylor twist, as both specialities have been reinvented in waffle form. Through a menu designed for sharing, diners can choose to accompany their Bammy and Festival waffles with a choice of topping to include Jerk Chicken, Crispy Spiced Banana Blossom or Boneless Curry Goat. A diverse selection of sides, designed for brightness and balance, include Roast pineapple & heirloom tomato chow, Lime, Chilli & Maple Plantain & Spicy Pumpkin rice.

Dom's mixing it up with his take on a Jamaican patty, pairing classic fillings like Callaloo, Beef, Saltfish or Chicken with an eclectic line-up of dipping sauces. Expect a traditional Oxtail gravy – the kind you'd usually hear is "done" before you've even reached the front of the queue – and a rich, sweet Dark Rum & Raisin sauce. Both will also be available to take home. Dessert will offer sweet nostalgia with a twist in the form of Old Skool Cake & Custard, or Roasted Plantain & Molasses Soft Serve. To drink, Marvee's will serve vegan-friendly pineapple punch, as well as peanut punch and carrot juice, alongside UNDR's selection of cocktails, wine and beer.

The Marvee's Food Shop interiors, designed to spark feelings of comfort and familiarity, will introduce colours and patterns from Caribbean homes and takeaway shops of the 1980's and 1990's, to incorporate retro wallpapers and warm textures with a contemporary edge. Mirroring the Marvee's Food Shop ethos, artwork from award-winning, contemporary Caribbean portrait artist Yvadney Davis has been commissioned by Dom to feature throughout the venue. Specialising in work which celebrates The Windrush Generation and their descendants, Yvadney's vibrant pieces will provide a platform for Caribbean heritage and storytelling.

"Marvee's Food Shop is something I've been dreaming about for years says Dan "It's the kind of place I've always wanted to create — one that brings together the food memories that shaped me. From childhood days in Jamaica to watching the women in my family work their magic in the kitchen, and of course, everything I've learned from my mum, Marvee.

"She's the heart of this project, and she'll always have a seat in the restaurant. Every project I've done has been rooted in love for Caribbean heritage and flavour — and this is no different. But I want to be clear: this isn't The Good Front Room. That's its own thing, and there's more to come on that later. Marvee's is a different vibe. More relaxed, more everyday. It's another way for me to keep challenging the stereotypes around Caribbean food in the UK. I can't wait to open the doors and welcome the community — old friends and new."

Dom Taylor grew up in Southeast London, the son of a Jamaican mother and Saint Lucian father. Memories of grocery shopping in his childhood, eating Gizzard Tarts or Cocoa Bread patties out of a brown paper bag from Brixton market, were formative memories for Dom and so he developed a love of cooking at an early age. Dom quickly learned that food isn't only for nourishment, but can tell a story, evoke joy and bring people together.

In his early twenties, Dom embarked on his career as a chef and trained at Lewisham College, before moving to gain experience in South Carolina. After returning home, Dom worked in various restaurant and hotel kitchens across London, to include as Head Chef of Belgraves Hotel in Belgravia then as Head Chef of The Courthouse Hotel in Shoreditch. In 2023, Dom took part in television series Five Star Kitchen: Britain's Next Great Chef (streamed on Channel 4 and Netflix) which saw him battle it out to win the prize of opening his very own hotel restaurant, as judged by hotel Chef Director Michel Roux. Dom won the competition, which led him to open The Good Front Room in the summer of 2023, where he served a refined Caribbean menu to a fully booked dining room, through to April 2024. Dom is also behind a range of his own Caribbean inspired condiments and sauces available on Delli, a plantain jam and Scotch bonnet hot sauce, as well 'Marvee's Rum', his very own Sorrel and Jamaican Ginger blended rum. C

“I am honoured to be stepping up as Head Chef of Bohemia and overseeing the talented kitchen team”

Tom Earnshaw

THE CLUB HOTEL & SPA, JERSEY’S LEADING LUXURY HOTEL, IS DELIGHTED TO ANNOUNCE THE APPOINTMENT OF TOM EARNSHAW TO HEAD CHEF OF BOHEMIA, THE ISLAND’S ONLY MICHELIN-STARRED RESTAURANT.

Situated on the ground floor of The Club Hotel & Spa, Bohemia Restaurant has been Jersey’s finest dining establishment since opening its doors in April 2004, holding a Michelin Star for 21 years. Perfectly located in the heart of St Helier and just a stone’s throw from the island’s breathtaking beaches, Bohemia Bar & Restaurant oozes style with its chic surroundings and vibrant bar. With private dining spaces and an exclusive Chef’s Table providing a real ‘behind the scenes’ experience, guests will be wowed by an incredible gastronomic treat.

One of the UK’s most exciting young chefs, Tom’s career has seen him work at four Michelin-starred restaurants including the three Michelin starred Moor Hall Restaurant (then two-star) as well as Northcote and The Samling hotels, before joining Bohemia as Sous Chef in 2023.

Tom will replace Callum Graham, who departs Jersey after nine years at Bohemia, including five as the restaurant’s Head Chef, for a new role in the UK.

In his new role, Tom will oversee Bohemia’s kitchen and lead the development of the restaurant’s signature tasting and á la carte menus, which celebrate seasonal produce from Jersey and France. He will continue to champion strong relationships with the island’s top producers, farmers and fishermen, as well as trusted French suppliers just 14 miles across the water.

Bohemia has long been committed to nurturing emerging culinary talent, with former team members having gone on to work at many acclaimed restaurants, earning Michelin stars of their own. Tom is the latest in this line of exceptional chefs to rise through the ranks.

Lawrence Huggler, Owner of Bohemia and The Club Hotel & Spa commented: “We are thrilled to have Tom take the helm at Bohemia. I have known him for several years and have seen his passion, creativity and commitment first-hand. Having sampled his new menu, I am incredibly excited for the restaurant’s next chapter. I’d also like to thank Callum for his outstanding contribution and wish him every success in his new role in the UK.”

Tom Earnshaw said: “I am honoured to be stepping up as Head Chef of Bohemia and overseeing the talented kitchen team. I am looking forward to introducing my new dishes and continuing to offer creative and memorable dining experiences for our guests, from Jersey and further afield.”

Tom Earnshaw will take over at Bohemia Restaurant on 8th June 2025

> **“It’s about using seasonal, local produce to craft a smaller, thoughtful menu where every dish earns its place and every ingredient shines”**
> **Todd Vickers**

THE MAYNARD, ONE OF THE PEAK DISTRICT’S MOST LOVED BOUTIQUE HOTELS AND DINING DESTINATIONS, HAS ANNOUNCED THE APPOINTMENT OF TODD VICKERS AS ITS NEW HEAD CHEF.

With a fresh new menu launching this June, Todd brings a wealth of Michelin-level experience, creativity, and a deep respect for local, seasonal ingredients to The Maynard’s kitchens.

Nestled between the rolling hills and rugged beauty of the Derbyshire countryside, The Maynard has earned a reputation for elegant interiors, relaxed dining, and warm hospitality. It is a year-round favourite for everything from Sunday lunches and romantic getaways to weddings and special celebrations – and under Todd’s leadership, its food offering is set to evolve further.

Having trained under Michelin-awarded chefs such as Adam Smith and worked at prestigious venues including The Man Behind the Curtain and The Yorke Arms, Todd’s philosophy is rooted in showcasing the natural quality of ingredients with simplicity and flair. He is passionate about creating food that is both comforting and refined, combining familiar British favourites with inventive flavour pairings.

“The Maynard presented an opportunity to work within one of the most historic, beautiful venues in the Peak District and create something truly memorable’ says Todd Vickers. “My vision is to offer food that is bold in flavour yet unpretentious – dishes that people genuinely want to eat. It’s about using seasonal, local produce to craft a smaller, thoughtful menu where every dish earns its place and every ingredient shines.’
Signature elements of Todd’s approach include combinations such as pairing fish and meat, a love of classical techniques, and a focus on ensuring that every guest feels connected to the food on their plate. Whether creating an exceptional pie, a showstopping dessert, or a refined dining experience, his aim is always the same: to delight and inspire with every mouthful.

Commenting on Todd’s appointment - Stephen Atkinson, Operations Director of Longbow Venues, said:

“We are delighted to welcome Todd to The Maynard. His philosophy of ‘quality over quantity’, his focus on seasonality, and his passion for nurturing talent in the kitchen are a perfect fit for our ethos. He brings energy, experience, and a clear vision that we know our guests will love.”

While Rob Hattersley, Founder and Managing Director of Longbow Venues, added:
‘Todd’s appointment signals a new chapter for The Maynard’s dining experience. His passion for fresh, local produce and his thoughtful approach to menu development perfectly reflect what The Maynard stands for – authenticity, quality, and warm hospitality.’
The Maynard is part of Longbow Venues, an independent hospitality group based in the Peak District. Founded in 2019, Longbow Venues operates a growing collection of award-winning heritage venues, including The Ashford Arms, The George Hathersage, The Peacock at Owler Bar, and The Peacock at Rowsley.

The group is known for its ‘people over profits’ philosophy, commitment to local sourcing, and its celebration of the very best of the region. The new menu will launch in June 2025

FEA Foodservice Equipment Association

Information Involvement Influence

FRIDGE FRONTLINE

MODERN REFRIGERATION IS SOMETHING OF AN EVERYDAY MARVEL. THE ABILITY TO CHILL OR FREEZE FOOD AT WILL IS SO COMMONPLACE, AND SO IMPORTANT TO HOW SOCIETY CAN CONTINUE TO EAT, THAT IT'S DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE LIFE WITHOUT IT.

A key concept for understanding how we use refrigeration is the cold chain. This is essentially a supply chain that uses refrigeration in order to keep temperature sensitive produce in peak condition. One of the end points of these chains is commercial kitchens. The procedures you have in place to store ingredients until they are required are part of a chain that can often lead back to the farm where they were produced, from anywhere in the world.

Once the main chain reaches your kitchen it divides into a series of subchains defined by your particular requirements. Manufacturers have created a range of equipment aimed at maintaining this chain of refrigeration to suit the particular needs of the product and the operator. A coldroom is suited to bulk storage, refrigerated or frozen upright cabinets for easy access to more regularly required ingredients, and refrigerated drawers built into worktops to create individual work zones. It is important that the refrigeration matches the food being stored in it and the work flow of the kitchen.

When batch cooking, food cannot be placed directly into a standard refrigerator as placing the hot product inside will raise the temperature of the storage compartment and will compromise the food safety of all the products stored in the refrigerator. The refrigerator will then struggle to maintain the temperature and energy consumption will increase.

In order to safely chill or freeze cooked food you need specialist equipment for rapid chilling. This method goes by a number of different names – blast chilling and shock freezing to name the two most popular – but it fundamentally involves driving the

temperature of the food as quickly and safely as possible through the temperature danger zone, to minimise the time when food is at risk from bacterial growth, without damaging or affecting the quality of the product being processed.

This rapid chilling requires precise control of the interior climate to prevent ice crystals from forming on the food as it cools. Modern systems have soft and hard chill functions using various temperature and humidity sensors to constantly adjust the temperature within the cooling chamber.

Rapid chilling isn't the only place where you find advanced climate control in refrigeration equipment. For example, dry ageing meat is a process that needs to maintain a precise set of conditions. If temperature and humidity are maintained correctly then meat can be aged for weeks or even months, allowing the flavour to develop and the texture to become increasingly tender, without allowing bacteria to grow.

Meanwhile, specialised bakery systems like retarder provers can be used to hold batches of dough, with temperature control slowing yeast fermentation, before raising temperature and humidity to restart the proving process.

Two of the big trends in commercial catering equipment in recent years have been the increased growth of multifunctional appliances and connectivity. Refrigeration is no different, with many manufacturers now providing access to operational and sensor data. This can help to firm up your food safety regime. Some manufacturers offer refrigerators with sensors that can detect when fish or meat is in danger of expiring, helping to create a more efficient stock management system and avoiding unnecessary food waste.

But it's truly multifunctional refrigeration equipment that has the potential to transform kitchens. It's entirely possible to combine low temperature slow cooking with rapid chilling systems, allowing for a single unit to cook batches of food and seamlessly transition to cold storage.

These batch cooking methodologies have previously been the domain of larger operations such as event catering, or multi-site locations serviced by a central production kitchen. As manufacturers have developed the technology they have been able to offer smaller units enabling a greater variety of businesses to take advantage of systems like cook-chill. This allows operators to expand their menu by making pre-preparation far easier, without having to sacrifice quality or safety.

Refrigeration equipment is already a key part of how kitchens operate. The demand for innovative new technology that either combines different processes together or integrates smoothly with different equipment will help to strengthen and extend your kitchen's cold chains, helping you to work more efficiently as well as increasing the options you have for creating great food.

Need information or advice about foodservice equipment? Ask the experts.
The Foodservice Equipment Association.
www.fea.org.uk #FEAuk

Camera Chris Watt Photography

SOME OF THE BIGGEST NAMES IN SCOTTISH HOSPITALITY HAVE COME TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME TO SHOWCASE EDINBURGH'S WATERFRONT IN LEITH AS SCOTLAND'S PREMIER DINING DESTINATION.

Home to three Michelin stars, a new Michelin Bib Gourmand and a two AA Rosette restaurant onboard Scotland's only five-star luxury floating hotel, the coastal Edinburgh neighbourhood now boasts more fine dining restaurants than anywhere else in the country.

The historic Port of Leith is also home to the UK's first vertical distillery, the world-famous Royal Yacht Britannia; and a wide variety of top restaurants brimming with the best fish and seafood landed around the shores of Scotland.

The campaign is being backed by Leith's Michelin-starred chefs, Tom Kitchin; Martin Wishart; and Heron's Sam York; as well as Roberta Hall-McCarron from The Little Chartroom and Bib Gourmand-awarded Ardfern; Fingal Hotel's The Lighthouse Restaurant; and Barry Bryson's newly opened Barry Fish.

The Port of Leith Distillery is also taking the dining experience to new heights in Edinburgh's historic whisky district with its top floor bar and restaurant, which enjoys elevated panoramic views of the Shore, the Edinburgh skyline and the water beyond.

The group of seven chefs and restaurants are joining forces to attract even more local diners to Edinburgh's vibrant waterfront in Leith, as well as food lovers travelling to the city from other parts of Scotland, the rest of the UK and from around the world.

Commenting on the Leith restaurant campaign, Tom Kitchin said:

"Edinburgh's waterfront has definitely earned its reputation as a world class restaurant destination over recent years, so I'm really excited to be teaming up with other top chefs and venues around the Shore to help reach an even wider local, national and international audience."

Martin Wishart, added:

"The Shore area of Leith has developed so much in the 25 years since opening the restaurant. The quality and range of restaurants and bars in this coastal neighbourhood is outstanding. It's a pleasure to be in the company of such a wide range of talented chefs."

Permanently berthed in Edinburgh's historic Port of Leith, luxury floating hotel Fingal has quickly established itself as a world-class foodie destination with all the glamour and style of a superyacht, but with an air of old-world Art Deco Ocean liner elegance. Fingal's The Lighthouse Restaurant boasts two AA Rosettes for culinary excellence.

Chief Executive of Fingal Hotel and The Royal Yacht Britannia, Franck Bruyère, said:

"We're continuing to enhance the dining experience for our guests following the expansion of our award-winning restaurant. We're also building on Fingal's reputation for culinary excellence by showcasing only the best Scottish seasonal produce. Fingal's galley team aims to create the finest quality Scottish menus that are bursting with seasonal flavours.

"In addition, and new for 2025, Fingal's original Bridge is being developed into a thoughtfully designed new private dining experience, offering a tailored and immersive gastronomic journey for guests, inspired by Fingal's working life at sea."

Re-launched in 2019, Fingal was developed and is managed by the award-winning team at The Royal Yacht Britannia, which

is opening a new world-class visitor centre and retail experience in Leith in spring 2025 to elevate its visitor journey. The enhanced visitor centre will incorporate 'never before seen' images and films, setting the scene of the Royal Yacht's rich history, giving visitors an enhanced sense of arrival before stepping aboard the Yacht itself.

Scottish chef Barry Bryson recently opened the doors to his first independent fish restaurant in February, bringing a fresh addition to the menu of venues on the Shore.

Barry Bryson said:

"With Barry Fish, it was always about finding a site in Leith, but never did I imagine we would be opening in such an amazing location as the Shore. Our dining experience is designed for everyone. We are not a special occasion restaurant, but we do want to be a special restaurant. It's about creating something that fits well with a community of diners - that's who I am."

Leith is now even more accessible by public transport from Edinburgh city centre and Edinburgh Airport throughout the day and evening. Edinburgh Trams now offer a direct and quick public transport link between The Shore, Port of Leith (Fingal Hotel stop) and Ocean Terminal (Port of Leith Distillery and The Royal Yacht Britannia stop)

The full list of participating chefs and restaurateurs on and around Edinburgh's waterfront at the Shore in Leith:

1. MARK ALSTON (Executive Chef, Fingal Hotel & The Royal Yacht Britannia) & Andrea Sendon Alonso (Restaurant Chef, Fingal Hotel)
The Lighthouse Restaurant & Bar, Fingal Hotel (2 AA Rosettes)
Alexandra Dock, Edinburgh EH6 7DX
www.fingal.co.uk/restaurant

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2. IAN STIRLING, Founder/Co CEO
Port of Leith Distillery Restaurant & Bar
11 Whisky Quay, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6FH
www.leithdistillery.com/the-distillery-bar

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3. TOM KITCHIN
The Kitchin (1 Michelin star)
78, Commercial Quay, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6LX
https://thekitchin.com

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4. MARTIN WISHART
Restaurant Martin Wishart (1 Michelin star)
54 Shore, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6RA
https://restaurantmartinwishart.co.uk

5. BARRY BRYSON
Barry Fish
62 Shore, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6RA
www.barryfish.co.uk

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6. SAM YORKE
Heron (1 Michelin Star)
87, 91A Henderson St, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6ED
https://www.heron.scot

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7. ROBERTA HALL-MCCARRON
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Camera Jodi Hinds

THE ROUX SCHOLARSHIP

> “ALTHOUGH WE DON'T WORK SIDE BY SIDE ANYMORE, THERE WAS NO CHEF I COULD HAVE REACHED OUT TO MORE THAN MARCUS WAREING TO COME ALONG TO THE ROUX SCHOLARSHIP EVENING AND SUPPORT ME. HAVING HIM THERE WAS VERY SPECIAL”

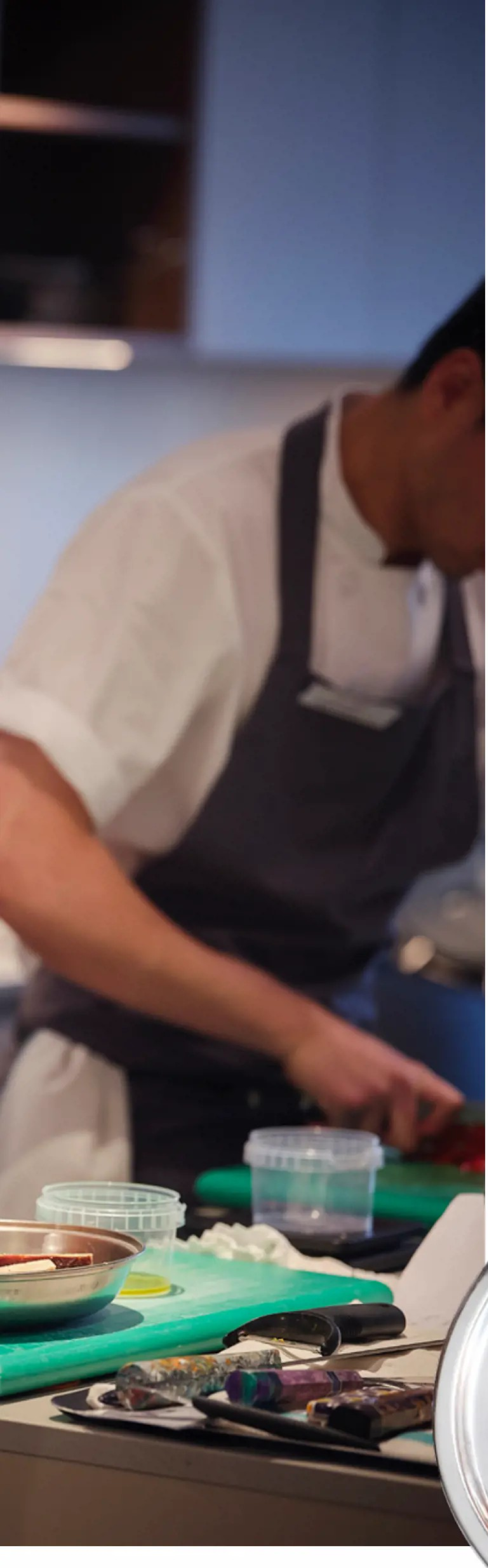
CRAIG JOHNSTON

– ROUX SCHOLAR 2025

> ‘I AM ALMOST LOST FOR WORDS. I THINK I NEED TO TAKE SOME REST, HAVE A GOOD SLEEP AND LET IT ALL SINK IN. I NEED TO PROCESS IT ALL; I HAVE A BIG YEAR AHEAD OF ME NOW!’

After the awards announcements and an incredible meal cooked by Adam Smith of Michelin starred Woven (Roux Scholar 2012) who was joined in the kitchen by Frederick Forster MCA, Roux Scholar 2000, I managed to pin Roux Scholar 2025, Craig Johnston, down for a quick chat about his win.

It's hard to fully describe the atmosphere of the Roux Scholarship final. As I arrive



at Coworth Park, the six candidates are mingling with guests and sponsors outside in the gardens of this incredible hotel. The finalists all look relieved; they've cooked their best and done all they can. The judges have been deliberating. A decision has been made – but there will be no leak. The judges remain poker faced during the whole canape and champagne reception. Brian Turner asks me if I want to know who won? When I say, "really?!" he replies with, "I can tell you – it was a bloody good chef"

As we enter the room for the awards presentation, one thing becomes very clear. All six finalists have bonded. Real friendships have been made. Though they each have their own dream of taking the title 'Roux Scholar 2025', the journey to this point has been one they will never forget and one which will, undoubtedly change all their lives. They are seated together at the front of the room, all nervous, yet all supporting one another.

The proof that these six chefs had bonded was never clearer than in the moment the Roux Scholarship Honorary President of Judges, three Michelin starred Elena Arzak, called Craig Johnstons name out as the winner. The five other finalists surrounded Craig, all congratulating him on his win. And it was to his fellow competitors that the newly titled Roux Scholar turned before heading to collect his prize. It is this embodiment of support, respect and friendship that has always defined The Roux Scholarship.

Craig Johnston, at 29-years-old, is Head Chef at Michelin starred Angler Restaurant in London. It was the first time Craig has entered The Roux Scholarship, having decided to give it a try in the last year he qualifies within the age limit.

Originally from Maidenhead, Craig began cooking aged 16. He moved to London's Pollen Street Social where he was on pastry, before moving to the Michelin starred Royal Oak in Paley Street.

In 2017, aged just 21 Craig competed in, and won, MasterChef: The Professionals. Following his win, he joined Marcus Wareing and over 4 years, worked his way to Head Chef. Marcus Wareing's restaurant closed permanently at the end of 2023, and Craig joined Angler a few months later. With no chef at his workplace to mentor him throughout his Roux Scholarship journey, Craig turned to his former boss and the chef he would call his mentor, Marcus Wareing, to support him in those final few hours before the decision was announced.

'Although we don't work side by side anymore, there was no chef I could have reached out to more than Marcus Wareing to come along to the Roux Scholarship evening and support me. Having him there was very special.

'The whole day was amazing, just to be a part of the competition is incredible – whatever the outcome. The support from the other finalists, the Roux family, the Alain Roux Culinary school and the sponsors has been amazing. As stressful as it has been, it has also been enjoyable. Except when we were told we had to cook beef shin in 2-3 hours…'

For this year's final, the six chefs were asked to prepare their own dish inspired by the cuisine of Honorary President of Judges Elena Arzak, centred around Wyndford Wagyu shank with bone marrow, borlotti beans and Basque-style stuffed potatoes. They had a wide choice of other ingredients with which to prepare their recipe.

Chef Elena Arzak said: 'The competition is famous, serious and very important. All the finalists expressed their individual, personal identities in the dishes they cooked. That's the future of gastronomy; the young chefs have new ideas and no limits to their creativity. There was a clear winner for me and all the judges agreed on that." For her, the honour of being Honorary President of Judges represented a full-circle moment: "I was very happy to be asked to be a judge this year. In 1989, aged 19, I worked at Le Gavroche, and the Roux family were very kind and are a very special part of my history. The Roux legacy is in my heart.'

In her role as Honorary Presidents of Judges, Chef Elena Arzak led the judging panel alongside joint chairmen Alain Roux and Michel Roux Jr, who were joined by Vice-Chairman Brian Turner CBE, Emily Roux, Sat Bains (1999 scholar), André Garrett MCA (2002 Scholar), Simon Hulstone (2003 Scholar), Angela Hartnett OBE and Rachel Humphrey. For the candidates, managing to remain focussed during the cooking and not be distracted by the calibre of judges walking around is something they must overcome.

'I think that maybe I am good at putting my blinkers on, and blocking out the judges' laughs Craig, 'I just wanted to focus on my cooking and the competition'

With such a high profile, high demanding and lengthy competition process, every competing chef relies on a great support network, and Craig is no different. 'My family, friends, work colleagues – they all gave me a boost of support when I needed it. Every step of the journey to the Roux Scholarship final, they were encouraged by how far I had come and supported me throughout. I am so pleased to bring this back home for them, as well as for me'

Craig will receive £6,000, with an additional £6,000 awarded if he stays with his current employer for an additional 15 months. He has a choice between two different star prizes: the invitation to cook and train under the supervision of a leading chef at a three-star Michelin restaurant anywhere in the world for up to two months; or a bespoke training programme tailored to his own ambitions, skills gaps and interests. This is in addition to an impressive list of prizes and culinary experiences provided courtesy of the Roux Scholarship's sponsors and preferred partners.

'I don't know where I want to go yet' Craig admits when asked where he would like to spend his stage, 'I am going to take some time to think about it!'

Craig was competing against the following chefs:
Katherine Altham, from Hélène Darroze at The Connaught, London
Liam Anderson, Midsummer House, Cambridge
Erin Jackson Yates, Bar Valette, London
Oliver Robinson, Coworth Park, Berkshire
Nikoletta Theofylaktidou, Restaurant Associates, London

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Words Quentin Sadler

GRANDE DAME

NEW VINTAGE OF A CLASSIC

CHAMPAGNE
BRUT
LA GRANDE DAME
L'ART DU PINOT NOIR
2018
Veuve Clicquot

courtesy of Veuve Clicquot

BARBE-NICOLE PONSARDIN LIVED THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY LIFE. DAUGHTER OF A TEXTILE MERCHANT WHO WAS ALSO THE MAYOR OF REIMS, HER LIFE CHANGED FOREVER WHEN SHE HAD AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE IN 1798, AT THE AGE OF 21 TO FRANÇOIS CLICQUOT. HER NEW FATHER-IN-LAW WAS ALSO IN TEXTILES, BUT LIKE MANY BUSINESSMEN IN CHAMPAGNE, HE OWNED VINEYARDS AND HAD A WINE BUSINESS TOO.

Barbe-Nicole's life looked set, but tragedy struck just seven years later, in October 1805, when François died. Barbe-Nicole, now known as the Veuve (French for widow) Clicquot, was determined to take charge of the family's wine house and make a success of it. This was totally against the norms of the day. Women generally were not allowed to own property, vote or earn money. The only exception was for widows and this gave Barbe-Nicole her chance.

It was a difficult time for Champagne. With the Royal Navy blockading European ports and the Napoleonic wars raging across the continent, sales were hard to generate.

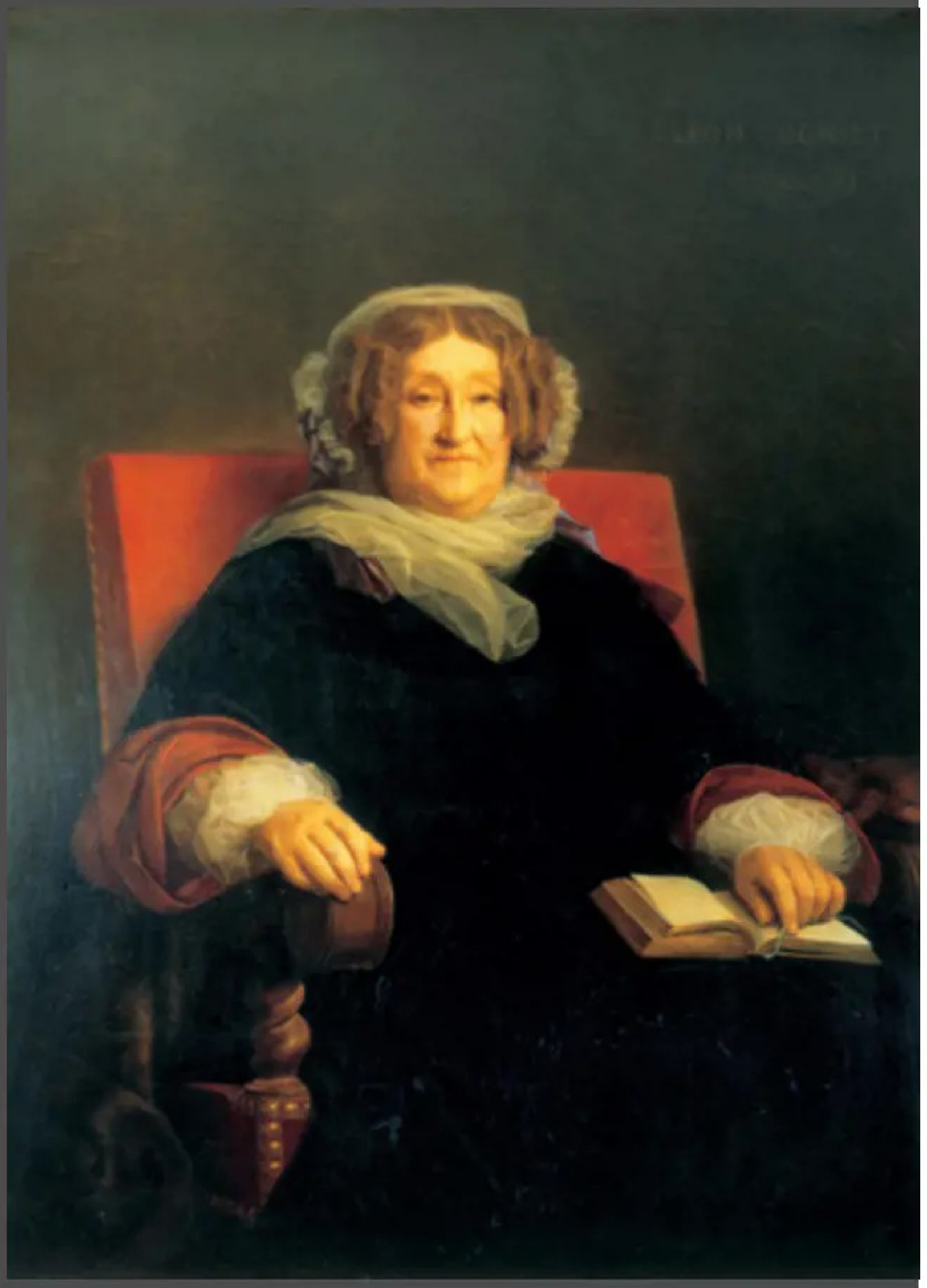
In 1810 Barbe-Nicole named the company Veuve Clicquot-Ponsardin and is believed to have created the first vintage Champagne in the same year. However, her innovative spirit did not stop there.

She is also credited, in 1816, along with her cellar-master Antoine-Aloys de Müller, with perfecting remuage – or riddling. This is the process that clears the yeast sediment from the bottle, ensuring the wine is bright. Before this Champagnes were cloudy and sweet, rather like pet-nats today. This was a fundamental improvement that revolutionised Champagne production forever.

As if that wasn't enough, in 1818 she also launched the first rosé Champagne made by blending still red wine into the still base wine. This method is still used by most rosé Champagne makers as it gives a more stable and vibrant colour.

With the end of the war in 1815, things really started to go Barbe-Nicole's way. Her cellars were full of Champagne from the legendary 1811 vintage. Her wines were clear, bright, sparkling and stable – not a given in Champagne back then.
She famously managed to get two large shipments of her Champagnes to Russia before the war had officially ended. There they were used to celebrate the peace and proved immensely popular with the aristocracy – indeed Tsar Alexander I apparently said that it was the only brand that he would drink. This huge market was now hooked on Champagne and, especially, those of Veuve Clicquot.

The business went from strength to strength, conquering new markets and finding new admirers throughout the nineteenth century. When Barbe-Nicole died in 1866 she was widely known as the Grande Dame of Champagne.



The celebrated portrait of Madame Clicquot Ponsardin often used by Veuve Clicquot – painted by Léon Cogniet around 1860

courtesy of Veuve Clicquot

A bottle of La Grande Dame ageing sur latte in Veuve Clicquot's cellars, note the portrait on the top of the capsule

Yours truly comparing the 2018 La Grand Dame in a Pinot Noir glass (left) and a Champagne flute (right) –

LA GRANDE DAME

So, when Veuve Clicquot launched their Cuvée de Prestige in 1972, La Grande Dame seemed the perfect name. That first release was made from the 1962 vintage and since then they have released a further 24 editions of La Grande Dame, only from the very best vintages.

I was fortunate enough to attend the London launch of the latest iteration of La Grande Dame, the 2018, at The LaLee Restaurant in the wonderful Cadogan Hotel, where Lily Langtry used to live in the 1890s and where Oscar Wilde was arrested in 1895.

Our host for the evening was Veuve Clicquot's charming head winemaker, Didier Mariotti. He began by presenting us with a tasting of his new baby playfully served in two different glasses side by side – a Pinot Noir wineglass and a classic Champagne flute.

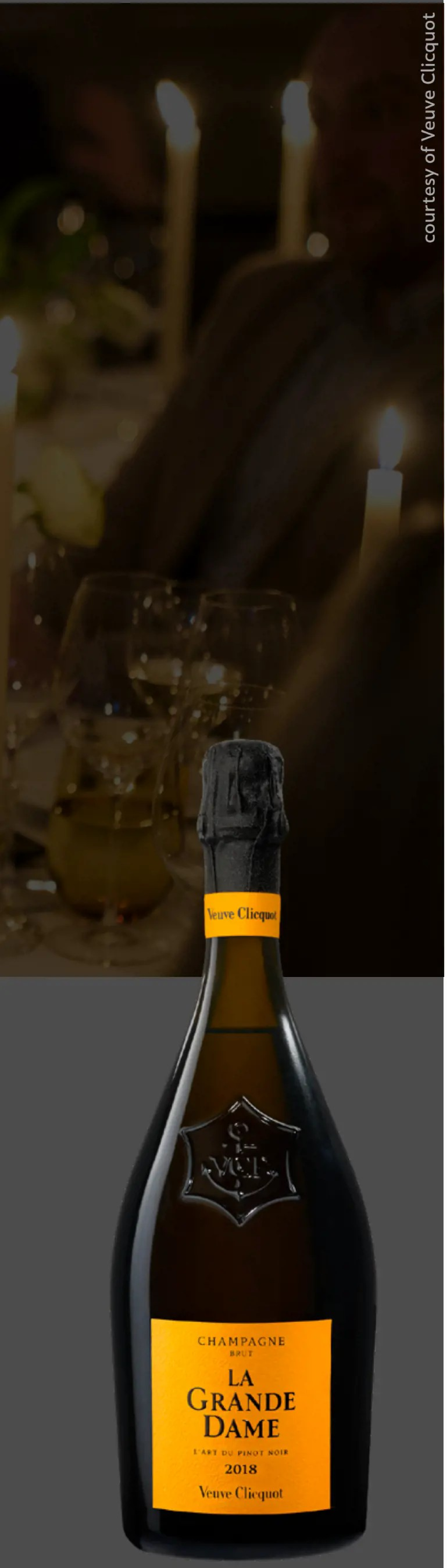
2018 Veuve Clicquot La Grande Dame
90% Pinot Noir with 10% Chardonnay
Dosage is 6 grams per litre of sugar

Tasted from the Pinot Noir glass:
The nose was taut, pristine and pure with notes of a spectrum of citrus fruits, toast and hazelnut, with delicate red fruit, peach skin, apple blossom and jasmine flowers.
The palate was soft and silky with a touch of cocoa nib, a dash of spice and that taut introspective quality, before it exploded onto my palate with ripe, but still restrained and elegant, raspberry fruit. The bright acidity and the firm mousse kept everything balanced and in check.

Veuve Clicquot

courtesy of Veuve Clicquot

Magnums of Veuve Clicquot undergoing remuage in Veuve Clicquot's cellars. Barbe-Nicole is credited with inventing this process



courtesy of Veuve Clicquot

Didier Mariotti presenting the wines to us and sharing his love for Pinot Noir

Didier kept saying that it is a very precise and elegant vintage that almost feels like a Blanc de Blancs. All that is true, but also from this glass, the Pinot Noir characteristics really shone through, as did the generosity of the vintage.

Tasted from the Champagne flute:
This was much more taut and pure as it brought out more vivid citrus and classic red apple notes, white peach, nectarine and that beguiling touch of rock pools and ozone, that I normally associate with Blanc de Blancs Champagne.

For me the Pinot glass made it taste much more like a non-sparkling wine, bringing out the pinot-like nuances, while the flute celebrated its more frivolous, but still glorious, nature. I loved both samples, they tasted different, that's for sure, but both were bristling with energy, whilst being held in check by precision and elegance. I gave the wine a score of 95/100 points.

We were also treated to two magnificent older vintages:

2008 Veuve Clicquot La Grande Dame
Still wonderfully energetic and pure, with a beguiling struck match note and a richer palate with crème brulée, raspberry and blood orange. I like this a lot as you had to go to it, metaphorically climb into the glass, rather than rely on the mousse to lift the wine out – 94/100 points.

1996 Veuve Clicquot La Grande Dame
As you might expect, this was much more developed and rich, with panettone, caramel and cooked peach notes. The palate was broad, honey, nuts, cinnamon, cinder toffee and peach strudel vying with the fresher, salty acidity and the incredible energy the wine gave off – 95/100 points.

MY CONCLUSIONS

This was a wonderful experience and I was astonished that there is so little Chardonnay in the 2018, as the wine is supremely elegant, taut and mineral, with touches of oyster shell minerality. It is incredibly complex and long in the mouth, making it a veritable triumph that works superbly well with food and without, it seems that it is not an accident that the widow Clicquot was often heard to say that "out black grapes give us the finest white wines". Above all I kept marvelling at the energy the 2018 La Grande Dame – and indeed the older vintages – gave off, that thrilling vivaciousness and verve – the Veuve conveying verve!

I could taste the expertise and the love put into this wine. It seemed worthy of Veuve Clicquot's history – I think Barbe-Nicole would approve.

Quentin Sadler is a wine writer, wine educator and mapmaker.

Words Quentin Sadler

SCALA DEI

THE TRUE PRIORAT PIONEER

Courtesy of Scala Dei

DRIVE SOME 60 KM WEST FROM TARRAGONA, A CHARMING CITY ON THE COAST OF CATALUÑA TO THE SOUTH OF BARCELONA, AND YOU FIND YOURSELF HIGH IN THE MONTSANT MOUNTAINS ADMIRING THE RUGGED BEAUTY OF THIS EXTRAORDINARY, ISOLATED LANDSCAPE. THE AIR IS CLEAR AND FRESH WITH WAFTS OF WILD MEDITERRANEAN HERBS, WHILE THE BREEZES OFF THE MOUNTAINS TEMPER THE EXTREME HEAT OF THE POWERFUL SUN.

In front of you lie the ruins of Cartoixa d'Escaladei, the Carthusian Monastery of Santa Maria d'Escaladei, built by monks from Provence from 1194. The monastery was given control of the region with the prior acting as the feudal lord – this gives the wine region its current name, Priorat.

For seven hundred years the monks, and their peasants, farmed the land producing everything they needed to sustain life, but it was their wine that was often singled out for fame. This period came to a violent end in 1834, when the peasantry rebelled, believing the land should be theirs. The monastery was destroyed and the new modernising government in Madrid awarded the land to the local farmers. For the most part the wine they made was for local consumption. However the old monastery's vineyards were bought by a cooperative of five families in 1844 who used the ancient cellars to make their wine.

Priorat remained very much a backwater throughout the challenging times of the early twentieth century and it was not until the 1970s when things began to change. They had survived the ravages of phylloxera, the Wall Street Crash and economic collapse caused by two world wars, the violence of the Spanish Civil War and the destruction it brought to Spanish, especially Catalan, society. However, by the 1970s, change was in the air.

In 1974 the families of Escaladei created a company called Cellers de Scala Dei, making Scala Dei the oldest commercial winery in Priorat. That same year they launched their first wine, called Scala Dei Cartoixa, onto the market and modern Priorat was born. In 2000, the Codorníu Raventós family became shareholders in Scala Dei, which enabled the company to modernise its cellar, replant vineyards and access Codorníu's contacts and distribution networks.

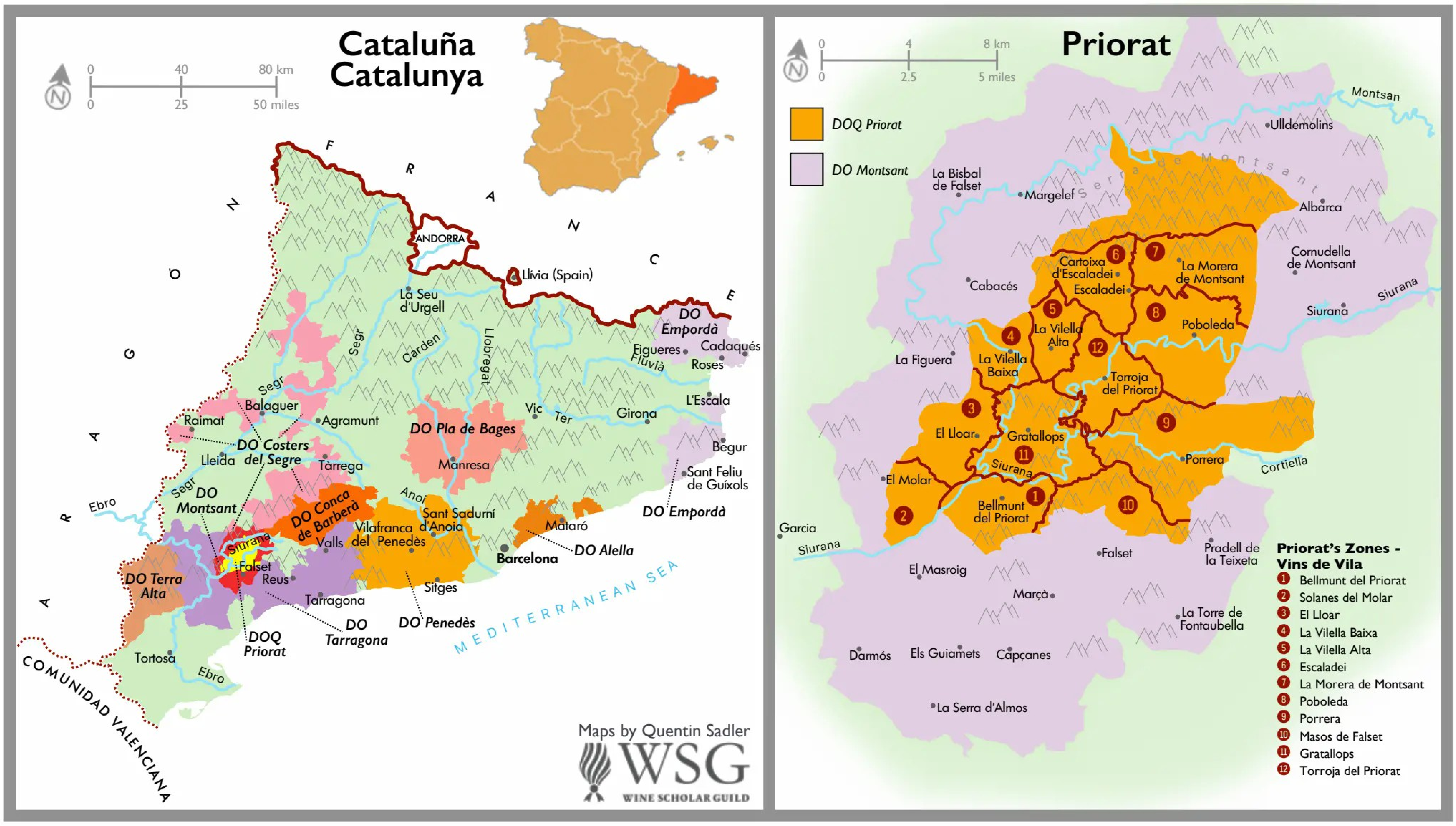
courtesy of turismesiurna

The ruins of the monastery

photo credit joan ggk

Cartoixa d'Escaladei nestling in the Montsant Mountains

Ricard Rofes walking in the beautiful vineyards at Scala Dei


Cataluña
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Balaguer
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Lleida
Tàrrega
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DO Conca de Barberà
Anoia
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Vilafranca del Penedès
Mataró
DO Alella
Barcelona
Siurana
Falset
Valls
Reus
DO Terra Alta
Tarragona
Sitges
DO Tarragona
DO Penedès
DOQ Priorat
Tortosa
Ebro
Maps by Quentin Sadler
WSG WINE SCHOLAR GUILD
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Serra de Montsant
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Margalef
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Comudella de Montsant
Cartoixa d'Escaladei
Escaladei
La Morera de Montsant
Cabacés
Siurana
Siurana
Poboleda
La Vilella Alta
La Vilella Baixa
La Figuera
Torroja del Priorat
El Lloar
Gratallops
Porrera
Cortiella
El Molar
Siurana
Bellmunt del Priorat
Garcia
Siurana
Falset
Pradell de la Teixeta
El Masroig
Marçà
La Torre de Fontaubella
Darmós
Els Guiamets
Capçanes
La Serra d'Almos
Priorat's Zones - Vins de Vila
1 Bellmunt del Priorat
2 Solanes del Molar
3 El Lloar
4 La Vilella Baixa
5 La Vilella Alta
6 Escaladei
7 La Morera de Montsant
8 Poboleda
9 Porrera
10 Masos de Falset
11 Gratallops
12 Torroja del Priorat

Wine map of Cataluña/catalunya (left) and Priorat (right) – maps created by Quentin Sadler for Wine Scholar Guild. Reproduced by kind permission of Wine Scholar Guild.

photo credit: joan ggk

Scala Dei has helped lead the charge in making Priorat one the most admired wine appellations in the world and in 2003 the region was awarded denominación de origen calificada (DOCa) status – denominació d'origen qualificada (DOQ) in Catalan. Rioja had been created a DOCa in 1991 and they remain the only two regions to be ranked above denominación de origin (DO) in Spain.

For all its fame, Priorat remains small with just 1,887 hectares of vineyards planted compared to Rioja's 62,000. In terms of wine produced, Priorat produces around 3 million litres of wine a year to Rioja's 300 million.

The climate here is Mediterranean so the focus is on grape varieties that thrive in the heat. Grenache and Carignan dominate plantings, but there are pockets of Cabernet, Syrah and Tempranillo too.

Grenache is known as Garnacha in Spanish and Garnatxa in Catalan, while Carignan, is Cariñena in Spanish and Samsó in Catalan.

The red wines are rich and powerful with high alcohol, but at their best with sumptuous fruit and great complexity. The soils are made up of decayed slate, known locally as llicorella – pronounced lick-ore eh-yah, slopes and terraces. This porous rocky soil is well drained and the vines put down very deep root systems looking for water and nutrients.

The slopes around Escaladei have lighter limestone and water retaining clay as well as llicorella. This means that the wines here can be lighter, fresher and more lithe on the palate than other parts of Priorat.

Some 4% of Priorat production is white and Grenache Blanc / Garnacha Blanca / Garnatxa Blanca is the most widely planted white grape.

After some ill judged experiments with wines in a more Bordeaux style in the 1980s and '90s Garnacha, is very much seen as the soul of Priorat. In many ways this down to Ricard Rofes, the dynamic and eternally youthful winemaker at Scala Dei since 2007. Born in nearby Montsant, he is a local and has helped to resurrect and has embraced the traditions of the area and emulated the winemaking of the past, but with modern knowhow and a super-clean winery.

I WAS THRILLED TO RENEW MY ACQUAINTANCE WITH THESE WINES RECENTLY, HERE ARE MY TASTING NOTES:

MASSIPA
DE SCALA DEI
PRIORAT

2022 SCALA DEI MASSIPA BLANCA

80% Garnaxta Blanca with 20% Chenin Blanc (Xenin in Catalan). Massipa, Scala Dei's only vineyard planted with white grapes, is an east facing vineyard which at 650 metres elevation catches the breezes off the sea, while the limestone soils help deliver more freshness and acidity. They deliberately picked the Chenin two days early to give high, zesty acidity. The Garnacha and Chenin were pressed together and co-fermented in concrete tanks using the wild yeasts. The wine was aged for three months on the lees with weekly lees stirring to add texture to the wine. It was then aged on the lees for another 12 months in oak foudres.

The nose offers heather, honey, herbs and sea salt notes together with pristine lemon and tangerine, richer nectarine and pear and whispers of jasmine flower. The main event here is the plate which is creamy and sensual with a mouth filling texture and vibrant, pure acidity. A magnificent dry white, try it with chicken or a cheese board – 94/100 points.

PLA DELS ÀNGELS
SCALA DEI
PRIORAT
D.O.Q.

2023 SCALA DEI PLA DELS ÀNGELS ROSÉ

100% Garnaxta grown on soils with as much clay as possible. The vineyards face north and east to retain more freshness and sit between 500 and 600m asl, which also helps with acid retention in the finished wine. The grapes were destalked and the juice macerated on the skins for three hours to achieve the delicate colour. After that it was fermented in stainless steel at low temperature as if it was a white wine.

The colour is a vibrantly attractive mix of copper and rose hip. The nose offers delicate red fruit, especially strawberry, pink grapefruit, sage and stone fruit, while the palate broadens out a little giving a generous mouthfeel, a touch of creaminess. Herbs, stony minerality, blood orange and red fruit vie with each other on the finish. A fabulous rosé, rich, flavoursome and refreshing – 92/100 points.

EL TRIBUT DE
SCALA DEI
2021
PRIORAT
D.O.Q.

2022 SCALA DEI EL TRIBUT

60% Garnaxta, 25% Syrah, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon aged 12 months in used French oak barrels.

A lovely earthy crimson colour with a nose of sweet spice, dried orange peel and freshly cooked red fruit and blackberry. The palate is soft and juicy with lots of blueberry, strawberry, pepper, clove, a touch of black tea and a suave well integrated finish. A friendly wine that would go with pretty much anything – 91/100 points.

PRIOR SCALA DEI
PRIORAT

2021 SCALA DEI PRIOR

65% Garnaxta, 15% Cariñena, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Syrah from old vines (35-65 years old) grown on llicorella soils. The components are fermented separately using native yeasts and a spontaneous fermentation. Before blending the wine is aged in French oak barrels and foudres (large wooden vats) for 12 months.

Rich, vibrant and pristine aromatics of wild herbs, liquorice, cooked fruit, blackberry, stewed strawberry, white pepper, smoky oak, pumice and slate mineral notes. The palate is mouth-filling and concentrated with strawberry and blackberry compote, currants. There are mineral notes with a background firmness and nibbles of liquorice and spice on the long, supple finish. Try it with stews and casseroles – 93/100 points.

CARTOIXA SCALA DEI
PRIORAT
COLLITA DE L'ANY 2018

2021 **SCALA DEI CARTOIXA**

85% Garnaxta and 15% Cariñena from 35-65 year old vines surrounding Scala Dei on llicorella slopes at between 400-800 m asl. Each grape variety and plot was fermented separately in stainless steel and cement tanks. The wine was aged for 18 months in a mixture of old and new French oak barrels.

Catroixa was the wine that started the modern Priorat story and the character shows. The nose is herbal and earthy with a wild fragrance of rich cooked plums, liquorice and a slaty, slaty minerality. The palate is plush and generous and yet the freshness and minerality gives it a purity and pristine quality often lacking in Priorat wines. Lots of stewed red fruit with layers of spice and savoury herbal flavours and an unexpected, but lovely, little bite of grainy tannins on the finish. Try it with roast meats and game or barbecued ribs – 95/100 points.

VI DE VINYA HISTÒRICA
MASDEU
DE SCALA DEI
Garnatxa, Sòl Argilo-Calcari
PRIORAT

2017 **SCALA DEI MASDEU**

100% Garnaxta from 100 year old vines in the south east facing Masdeu vineyard which sits at 1800 metres asl. Just 2000 bottles are maddest fermentation was in a single cement tank with a spontaneous fermentation. The wine was aged for 19 months in cement and oak foudres.

Scented, lithe, spicy, floral and fragrant. This is an incredibly alluring wine. The palate has a supple texture, black pepper, spices, herbs, saltiness, liquorice, pumice notes, lately minerality, a touch of chalkiness, red fruit and soft, lacy tannins. An elegant and delicious wine that would be fabulous with long slow cooked lamb – 97/100 points.

photo by Quentin Sadler

Vines growing in that all important llicorella soil

courtesy of Scala Dei

Scala Dei's south east facing Masdeu Vineyard which sits at 1800 metres asl. Note the red clay in the limestone soils

MY CONCLUSIONS

Scala Dei have always made very good wines, but have climbed new heights in recent years, thanks to Ricard Rofes. With these wines they had retained the wild, tempestuous character of the region, but somehow avoided the baked and rustic feel that can sometimes be found in Priorat. These are superb wines with real character, finesse and drinkability that would sit well on many wine lists. They are great food wines as their smooth, spicy, savoury nature works perfectly with many types of cuisine.

If you are in any doubt as to how drinking these wines will make you feel, then do bear in mind that Scala Dei essentially means "stairway to heaven"!

Scala Dei wines are distributed in the UK by Berkmann Wine Cellars.

Quentin Sadler is a wine writer, wine educator and mapmaker.

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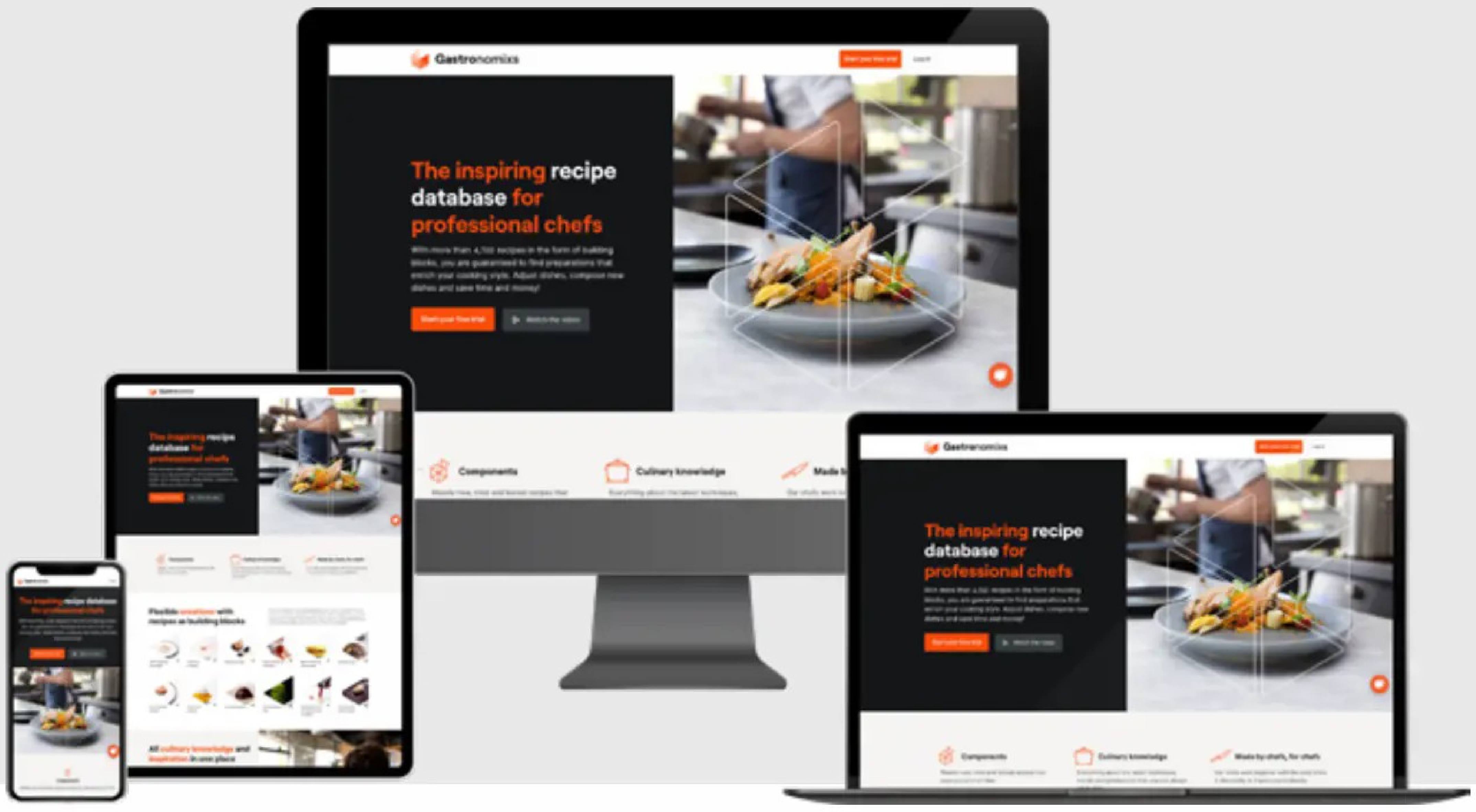


The inspiring recipe database for professional chefs

Go the modular route

In professional kitchens, you work with component recipes. Think of a dressing, sous vide pork loin or pommes dauphine. Gastronomixs provides recipes in exactly that way. The beauty of the way Escoffier founded this strict and organized way of working, lends itself for the quick creation of new dishes. **Mixing and matching recipes to meet the demand of guests.** A modular system for creativity so to say, you could compare it to playing with LEGO® as a child. It gives you the freedom to create a whole new world of original, eye-catching dishes. A component will never define your style and signature, the combination of components in a dish will!

About Gastronomixs

Gastronomixs.com is an award-winning culinary platform, which offers thousands of components for everyday ingredients. From a nectarine broth to a chocolate bergamot espuma or kimchi reduction. **Gastronomixs is also proud to work with the leaders of our industry:** nobody less than Mark Sargeant from restaurant MS was their guest chef recently. Many other renowned chefs like Luke French, Ben Murphy, Gareth Ward**, Adam Handling*, Ayo Adeyemi and Tom Booton are sharing various signature recipes on the platform. All recipes on Gastronomixs are building blocks for an endless supply of dishes. The platform is very user-friendly and organized in such a way that you will quickly find whatever you need. **Currently, over 39,000 chefs are already benefitting from this online tool.** Scan the QR-code to learn more about Gastronomixs.

HEY CHEF!
THE CHEF IS ALWAYS RIGHT
Building blocks for chefs
De inspirerende receptendatabase voor professionele chefs

Creating with building blocks and smart technology

The Gastronomixs team continuously creates new components. There are new recipes added to the platform every week. All those tried-and-tested recipes **save you thousands of hours (!) of testing and food waste.** And it's not only recipes, but the platform also gets more and more attractive because of newly added tech features.

Users repeatedly mentioned that they adjust components on Gastronomixs, often after printing the recipes and scribbling on them. **Cooking is, of course, evolving on each other's recipes.** Less sugar, a different fruit coulis... just to name two examples. So Gastronomixs listened to their users and launched a new feature that makes it possible to **create variants** on component recipes! This gives chefs even more flexibility in working with the ever-expanding recipe database of Gastronomixs.

Fire-cooked veal cheek tortellini with bone marrow coconut carbonara, finished with coriander and carrot crisp

This dish deliciously brings together the robust flavours of veal cheek and smoked bone marrow. The tortellini is prepared the traditional way and then cooked over an open fire for a subtle smoky flavour. This is enhanced with a unique twist of coconut carbonara, which brings a surprising but harmonious balance of creaminess with a sweet hint. The finishing touch is a carrot crisp drizzled with lime leaf oil, providing a fresh, spicy counterpart that complements the deep, rich flavours of the pasta.

Yellow carrot toffee crème with mandarin and saffron

For this yellow carrot toffee cream, it is important to cut the yellow carrot into equal pieces. The tangerine and saffron give this recipe elegance with a slight aromatic bitterness. It loses a lot of moisture as it is slowly roasted in the oven, but this only enhances the flavour!

Makes 3kg.

Ingredients

- 6kg yellow carrot, cut in rough pieces
- 1200ml whipping cream
- 1,2g saffron
- 4 pieces tangerine, zest
- as needed extra virgin olive oil
- as needed vegetable stock
- as needed salt and pepper

Preparation method

- Sprinkle the yellow carrot with a little salt and olive oil.
- Place on a baking tray in an oven preheated to 140°C.
- Cook for about 1 hour. The cubes should be very soft and slightly coloured.
- Meanwhile, cook the cream with the saffron and mandarin zest for 25 to 30 minutes.
- Strain the reduced cream.
- Place the yellow carrot in the mixer and add a good dash of extra virgin olive oil, salt and pepper.
- Blend with the cream until smooth, adding just enough water to keep the blender running.
- Pour through a fine sieve and season to taste.

Toffee crème with golden beetroot

Blending the golden beetroot with the reduced crème gives you an extremely smooth, toffee-like cream

Makes 2kg of crème.

Ingredients

- 3kg yellow beetroot
- 1l whipping cream
- 8g gamsa medina
- 3 cloves garlic, bruised
- as needed olive oil
- as needed salt and pepper

Preparation method

- Cut the golden beetroot into equally sized pieces of approx. 2cm x 2cm.
- Sprinkle with olive oil, salt, and pepper and roast in the oven at 130°C for about 40 minutes, with the oven door slightly open.
- The golden beetroot should be cooked through and lightly browned.
- Meanwhile, cook the whipping cream together with the gamsa medina and cloves of garlic, regularly stirring.
- Strain the cream once it can no longer thicken without burning.
- Put the cooked golden beetroot and reduced cream in a blender and blend until they form a toffee crème. If needed, add a little water and/or olive oil to achieve the right thickness.
- The crème should be completely smooth.
- Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Hey chef,

ready to uncover your
full creative potential?

Gastronomix
Empowering chefs to create

RECIPES

COCOLADA: COCONUT, TROPICAL FRUIT, RUM
BY GRAHAM MAIRS PASTRY CHEF

T4T: PASSION FRUIT, YUZU, MACHA TEA
BY GRAHAM MAIRS PASTRY CHEF

RAZZAMATAZZ: RASPBERRY, TONKA, TOMATO
BY GRAHAM MAIRS PASTRY CHEF

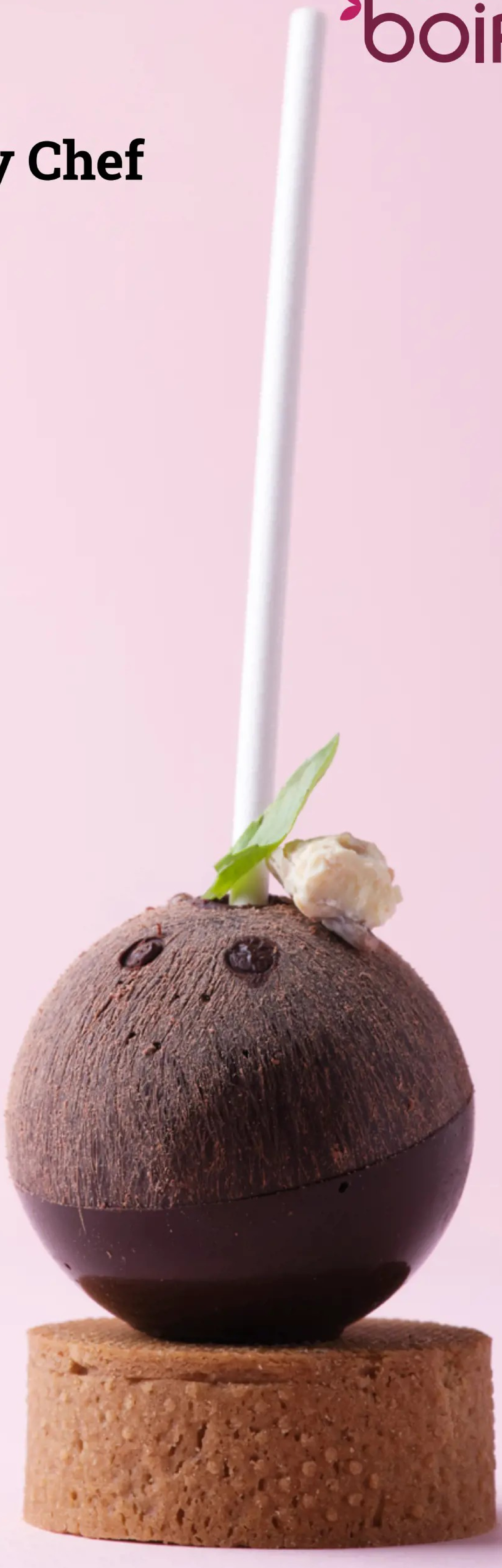
HONEYBERRY AND MELISA CRESS SEMI FREDDO WITH SUMMER MIX GRANOLA, BASIL MERINGUE, BLACKBERRY
BY STEVE WALPOLE

ROASTED LEEK AND CAVIAR
BY STEFAN JÄCKEL

LES VERGERS
boiron

COCOLADA: COCONUT, TROPICAL FRUIT, RUM

By Graham Mairs Pastry Chef



COCONUT CREMIEUX

INGREDIENTS

- **60g Coconut 100% Puree Les vergers Boiron**
- 100g Coconut cream
- 30g Castor sugar
- 30g Glucose DE60
- 5g Lime zest
- 100g Mascarpone
- 250g 35% Cream
- 6g Gelatin
- 4g Vanilla
- 60g Malibu or white rum

METHOD

Soak gelatin sheets in cold water bring to boil coconut water, glucose & sugar, remove from heat, add gelatin Pour into a bowl, add coconut cream & mascarpone, whisk until dissolved.

Add cream, vanilla, lime and malibu, sieve into a container & set infridge for 24hrs (prepare in advance).

Once set, either reheat to 30°C to fill sphere or preferably whip to soft peak cream consistency ready for filling. Place in piping bag.

TROPICAL COMPOTE

INGREDIENTS

- **Tropical fruit 100% Puree 60g Les vergers Boiron**
- 180g Pineapple 10mm diced
- 3g Jasmine tea
- 20g Castor sugar
- 1g Pectin NH
- 1u Lime zest
- 1u Lime juice

METHOD

Make an infusion with water & jasmine tea bring boil, remove, cover with cling-film & cool naturally.

Peel / dice pineapple into 10mm cubes.

Place into a sautés' pan, & gently heat to start releasing the natural sugars.

Mix sugar, puree, pectin, lime juice & zest

Add infusion to pineapple, then sugar mix Cook down by ½ Chill & reserve for filling / finishing

STREUSEL CRUMBLE

INGREDIENTS

- 60g T55 Flour
- 10g Cocoa Powder
- 75g Panela
- 75g Ground Hazelnut Flour
- 75g Butter
- 1g Sea salt
- 1g Bicarbonate Soda

METHOD

Pre-heat oven to 155°C, mix all ingredients together, set in fridge. Grate onto a silicone mat and bake for 15-20 minutes.

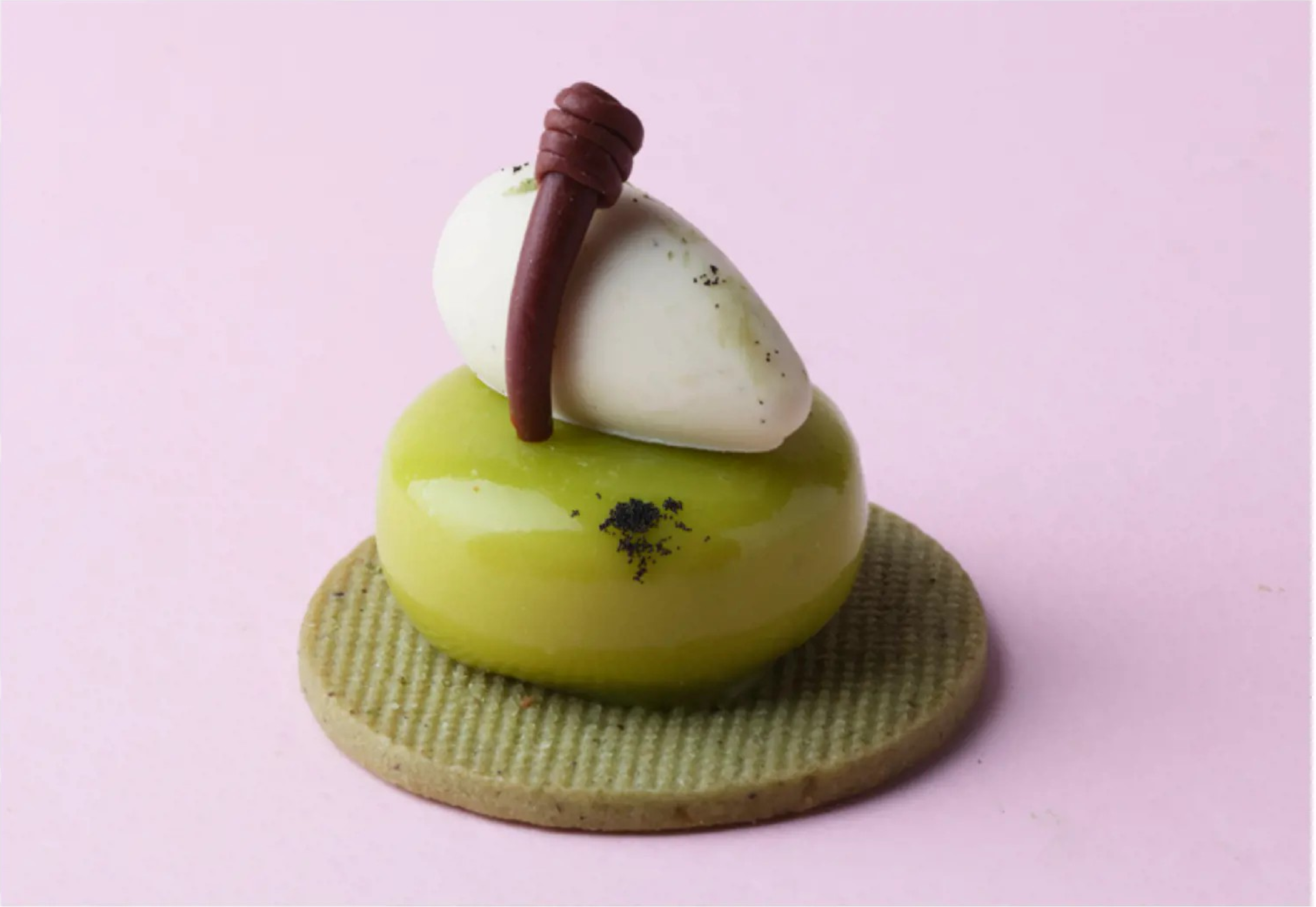
Chill for next stage.

FINISH TOUCH

Finish by filling a brushed chocolate sphere, a coconut cluster and mint leaf

T4T: PASSION FRUIT, YUZU, MACHA TEA

By Graham Mairs Pastry Chef



PASSION FRUIT NAMELKA

INGREDIENTS

- **200g Passion Fruit Puree Les vergers Boiron**
- 10g Glucose
- 125g White Chocolate
- 6g Gelatin Bloom 200
- 30g Water Gelatin
- 300g 35% Cream
- 1g Vanilla

METHOD

Heat the pulp and glucose to a temperature of 175°F (80°C) and add the gelatin (which you have rehydrated in advance).
Gradually pour the mixture over the melted couverture.
Immediately mix using an electric mixer to make a perfect emulsion.
Add the cold cream.
Mix in the electric mixer again.
Leave to stiffen in the refrigerator.

YUZU CUSTARD

INGREDIENTS

- 125g Yuzu Puree Les vergers Boiron
- 125g Whole Egg
- 125g Castor Sugar
- 6g Gelatin Bloom 200
- 6g Lime Zest

METHOD

Combine eggs, sugar yuzu together.
Heat over bain-marie and cook to 85°C, once the temperature is reached remove, add gelatin and zest.
Cool and chill for 24 hours.

MACHA GLAZE

INGREDIENTS

- **120g Kalamansi Puree (Macha Tea Infused) Les vergers Boiron**
- 215g White Chocolate
- 155g Condensed milk
- 200g Sugar
- 225g Glucose DE60
- 16g Gelatin
- 100g Nappage
- 1u Macha Tea Infusion

METHOD

Mix chocolate and milk together in a jug.
Heat sugars with Macha Tea and Kalamansi puree to 65°C.
Add soaked gelatin and pour over chocolate milk mix, blend for 1 minute.
Add nappage and color, blend for 1 minutes and strain through.
Leave for 24 hours ideally before use

PISTACHIO BISCUIT

INGREDIENTS

- 225g T45 Flour
- 30g Almond Flour
- 15u Macha Tea Powder
- 2g Pistachio Flour
- 92g Icing Sugar
- 148g Butter
- 2g Sea Salt
- 50g Egg Yolks

METHOD

Combine all ingredient together until smooth paste.
Roll to 3mm thickness, cut / size desired.
Bake at 150°C for 14-16 minutes.

YUZU VANILLA CHANTILLY

INGREDIENTS

- **80g Yuzu Puree Les vergers Boiron**
- 30g Sugar
- 5g Vanilla
- 100g Mascarpone
- 250g 35% Cream
- 5g Gelatin Bloom 200

METHOD

Heat puree and sugar, add gelatin and dissolve.
Add mascarpone and cream and blend to emulsify.
Set for 24 hours before re whipping.

RAZZAMATAZZ: RASPBERRY, TONKA, TOMATO

By Graham Mairs Pastry Chef

LES VERGERS boiron®

RASPBERRY GAZPACHO

INGREDIENTS

- **100g Raspberry Puree Les vergers Boiron**
- 50g Tomato Juice
- 100g Watermelon Juice
- 30g Castor sugar
- 1g Tabasco
- 5g Saffron Threads

METHOD

Heat watermelon, tomato juice and saffron to 65°C.
Add sugar and tabasco.
Cool.
Add raspberry puree and combine, serve immediately.

RASPBERRY GLAZE

INGREDIENTS

- **120g Raspberry Puree Les vergers Boiron**
- 215g White Chocolate
- 155g Condensed Milk
- 200g Sugar
- 225g Glucose DE60
- 16g Gelatin
- 100g Nappage
- 1u Red Color

METHOD

Mix chocolate and milk together in a jug.
Heat sugars with raspberry puree to 65c.
Add soaked gelatin and pour over chocolate milk mix, blend for 1 minute.
Add nappage and color, blend for 1 minutes and strain through.
Leave for 24 hours ideally before use.

TONKA RASPBERRY CREMIEUX

INGREDIENTS

- **80g Raspberry Puree Les vergers Boiron**
- 30g Sugar
- 5g Vanilla
- 100g Mascarpone
- 250g 35% Cream
- 5g Gelatin 200 Bloom

METHOD

Heat puree and sugar, add gelatin and dissolve.
Add mascarpone and cream and blend to emulsify.
Set for 24 hours before re whipping.

FINISH TOUCH

Finish with a tomato stem sugarpaste.

HONEYBERRY AND MELISA CRESS SEMI FREDDO WITH SUMMER MIX GRANOLA, BASIL MERINGUE, BLACKBERRY

By Steve Walpole

KOPPERT CRESS
Architecture Aromatique

For 4 portions

HONEYBERRY AND MELISSA CRESS SEMI FREDDO

INGREDIENTS

- 120g frozen or fresh honeyberries (honeyberry jam would also work).
- 160g cream cheese
- 2 punnets of melissa cress
- 50g honey (take out if using honeyberry jam)
- 80g Swiss meringue
- Summer mix granola
- 50g Honey
- 40g jumbo oats
- 10g chopped hazelnuts
- 10g chopped almonds
- 15g freeze dried honeyberries
- 1 punnet of honey cress
- 1 punnet limon cress
- Basil cress meringue
- 2 punnets basil cress
- 100g caster sugar
- 70g egg white
- Plating
- Blackberry halves
- 1 punnet of each summer mix cress

METHOD

For the semi freddo – in a Thermomix or food processor blend the fruit with the cut melissa cress and the honey to a smooth mix. Now fold through the cream cheese, then gentle fold in the Swiss meringue. Place into a piping and fill the required moulds. then freeze as quickly as possible.

For the granola – in a pan heat the honey with the honeyberries so that the honey is fluid and the red is seeping out the berries then stir in the oats and nuts and allow the honey to bubble and darken slightly. Remove from the heat and then stir in the snipped limon and honey cress. Then pour onto silicone paper and allow to set. If still sticky place in the oven at 180c for a few minutes. Once cooled and set break into small chunks.

For the basil meringue – place the basil cress and sugar into a nutribullet and blitz to a fine green powder. Then in a Thermomix whisk the egg whites at 60c with the basil sugar until a glossy shiny meringue is formed. Then spread onto a baking sheet at bake at 120c for about 45 mins until dried and crisp. Then break into nice little pieces.

FOR PLATING

Turn out the semi freddo and place onto a plate, decorate with blackberry halves, some granola and meringue. Finish with pieces of each of the 4 summer mix cress

ROASTED LEEK AND CAVIAR

By Stefan Jäckel

About the creator, chef Stefan Jäckel:

Stefan Jäckel is the creative mastermind leading the kitchen at the renowned La Rôtisserie restaurant in Storchen Zürich. Since May 2020, he has been delighting guests with exquisite, seasonal dishes, known for their refined balance and attention to detail. Under his leadership, the restaurant has earned a Michelin star and 17 GaultMillau points, highlighting his exceptional culinary skills and craftsmanship.

Jäckel's philosophy blends classic elements of French cuisine with modern influences and high-quality, locally sourced ingredients. He strives for perfection in every dish, achieving a remarkable harmony of flavors. His mastery in creating sauces that elevate each dish to new heights is particularly noteworthy.

Whether at the coveted Chef's Table, where guests can enjoy an exclusive behind-the-scenes view of his kitchen, or at one of his popular cooking workshops, Stefan Jäckel captivates both food enthusiasts and gourmands alike.

"There isn't an abundance of vegetables coming through our kitchen at the end of the Winter, aside from a handful of excellent selections. That's when I had the idea of using leeks for their sweetness, pairing with oysters and caviar, bringing the necessary salinity, iodine and nuttiness to the leek. These ingredients lift the rather humble leek into a new sphere and turn it into an elegant dish." – Stefan Jäckel

LEEK

INGREDIENTS

- 4 sticks of fresh leek

METHOD

Wash the leek, remove any broken leaves or imperfections. Cut to desired length and pat dry. Preheat the oven to 250 degrees Celsius and roast for 15-20 minutes, until almost charred. Rest until reaching room temperature, cut into halves, remove the core and chop the core finely.

VINAIGRETTE

INGREDIENTS

- 5 tbsp. of Champagne vinegar
- 4 tbsp. rapeseed oil
- 2 tbsp. vegetable broth
- 1 tsp. mild tarragon mustard
- 1 shallot, finely diced
- 2 tbsp. pickeld mustard seeds
- Salt
- Pepper
- Sugar

METHOD

Mix the vinegar, rapeseed oil, mustard and vegetable broth in a blender until achieving a uniform consistency. Pour the vinaigrette into a bowl and add the pickled mustard seeds, diced shallot and season to taste with salt, pepper, and sugar.

WATERCRESS PUREE

INGREDIENTS

- 300g Watercress
- 1 tbsp. shallot brunoise
- 4 CL Dry white wine
- Rapeseed oil
- Salt
- Cayenne pepper

METHOD

Add 2 tbsp. of rapeseed oil to a preheated pan. Cook the shallot on low heat for three minutes, add the watercress and deglaze with white wine. Boil until the alcohol evaporates and blend in a kitchen blender. Chill the puree on ice, constantly whisking and add rapeseed oil until a smooth texture is achieved. Add salt and cayenne pepper to taste.

POACHED OYSTER

INGREDIENTS

- 8 Fresh Oysters, medium size

METHOD

Remove the oysters from their shells and catch the oyster water in a cup. Strain the oyster water and bring to 80 degrees Celsius in a pot. Poach the oysters for 30 seconds until fully coagulated. Remove the oysters from the pot and store in the fridge until further use.

PLATING

INGREDIENTS

- 50g N25 Caviar
- Panko crumble

METHOD

Place half of a leek on a cold plate, ideally of an oval shape. Marinate the chopped leek core with vinaigrette and add it back to the leek. Cut poached oysters in half and place them on the leek, followed by three dabs of watercress puree. Add three quenelles of N25 Caviar and garnish with a few watercress leaves, more vinaigrette, and panko crumble.

For more information about N25 Caviar, please visit us at **www.n25caviar.co.uk** or scan the QR code to directly WhatsApp us.

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